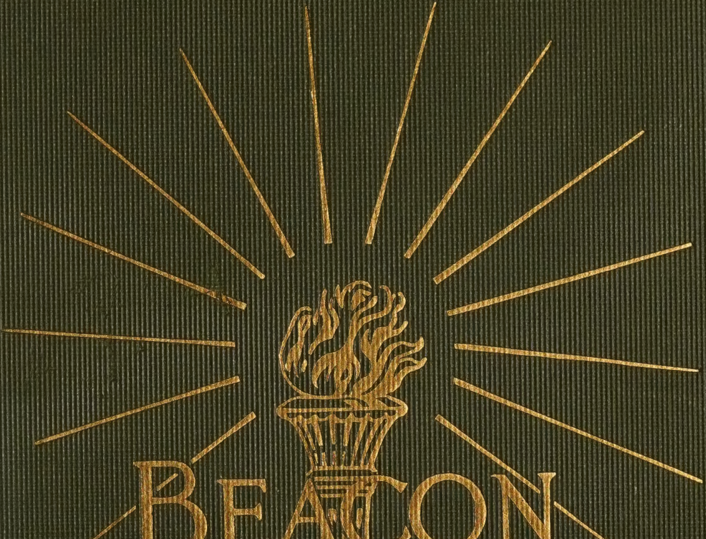

BEACON LIGHTS OF PROPHECY

by

C. E. LINDBERG

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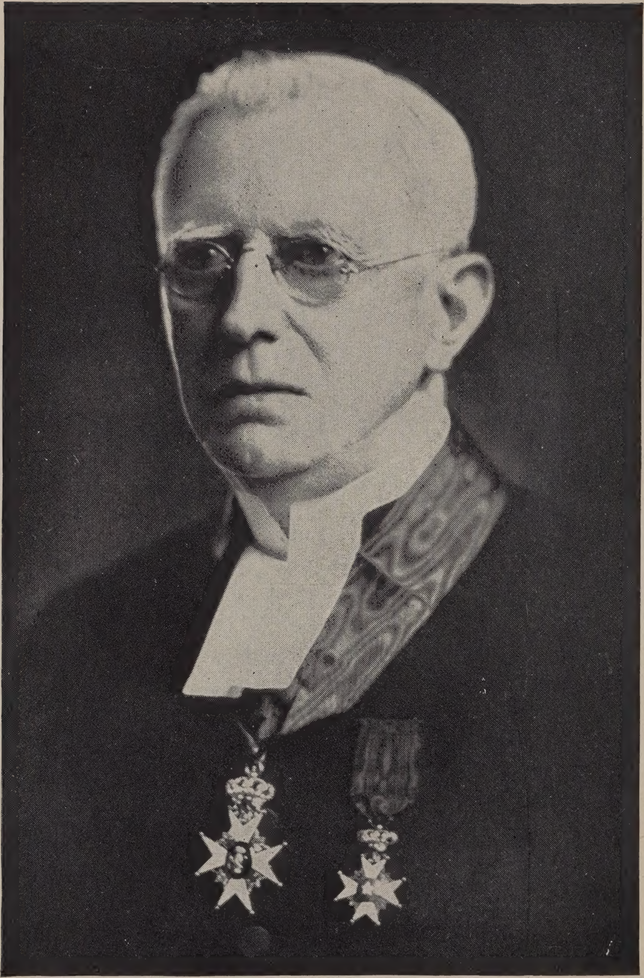

Conrad Emil Lindberg, D.D., LL.D.

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Beacon Lights of Prophecy
in the Latter Days

by

CONRAD EMIL LINDBERG, D. D., LL. D.
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

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Preface

If we love Jesus Christ, we naturally love His return. When Paul was in the Mamertine prison in Rome, he wrote to Timothy: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 8). Notice *"loved his appearing."*

The Old Testament saints waited for the coming of the Messiah. As He tarried, many ceased to expect Him. But there were some waiting like Simeon and Anna. They lived when Christ was born. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he should live to see Christ. The Old Testament saints had an advantage, because by reading Dan. 9. 24–27 they could calculate when Christ would enter Jerusalem as a prince and the time of His subsequent suffering and death. But the New Testament saints have no Bible passages which give an approximate time when Christ will return. We can only calculate the period when the last days are evidently approaching. Those who live at the setting up of the abomination of desolation can estimate more closely the appearing of Christ in glory by studying Daniel, the Gospels, Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians, and the book of Revelation. While on earth Christ never revealed to His disciples the time of His return. Compare Mt. 24. 36. But by reading the prophecies and observing the signs we may be able to know the period in which we live. Surely, every attentive and observant reader of the second chapter of Daniel knows what periods have passed. By reading 2. 41–43 we clearly know that we live in the period designated as a mixture of "iron and clay." On the scale of the image of Nebuchadnezzar we have advanced in history to the feet of the image. But only God knows the length of this period of "iron and clay." But we ought to study the signs of the times and heed Mt. 24. 42: "Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." There are two kinds of passages that bear on the Second Coming; the first kind warns that the Lord may come unexpectedly without any especially marked signs (Mt. 24. 37–44); the second kind points out certain outstanding signs which must precede (Mt. 24. 29–33; Lk. 21. 25–28; Mt. 24. 15; 2 Th. 2. 1–12). This problem may partly be solved by studying all the signs. Compare the treatment of signs in this book. We should also consider that the day of the Lord is not an ordinary day, but rather a period. There are two outstanding phases in the Advent. According to 1 Th. 4. 16, 17 Christ descends and meets the translated saints in the air. Then later He comes and they are with Him, according to Rev. 19. 11–14; Jude v. 14. Compare 1 Th. 3. 13: "at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."

In observing and noting the light that the Word of Prophecy throws upon future events we were led to choose as title for this book, *Beacon Lights of Prophecy in the Latter Days.*

The Beacon Lights are preceded by brief introductions on Daniel, Zechariah, and the book of Revelation. Then follow discussions on the Advent from both the Old and New Testament viewpoint. The reasons for the certainty of the personal Second Coming of Christ are presented. Misconceptions in regard to the meaning of Bible verses are pointed out, and the evident meaning is discussed. The signs of the Second Coming of Christ are discussed under the divisions of remote, less remote, nearer and nearest signs.

The Beacon Lights of Prophecy light the way to a better understanding of the prophecies concerning the Second Advent. Although Daniel and the book of Revelation are more fully explained as to the latter days and the Second Advent, the Beacon Lights also throw light on other prophets like Zechariah. The sunlight of the eschatological discourses of Christ and the Beacon Light in the Pauline epistles throw a clear illumination on the revelations of the mysteries concerning the awful apostasy and the subsequent restoration, as pictured by the inspired Paul in his treatment of the resurrection and the great world changes. The Beacon Lights are the prophecies of the Bible which illumine one another. The figurative expression is used to show how the Church and her members are guided by the prophetic signs towards the goal, as the ship on the sea is directed by the lighthouses, or the troops on land by beacon lights.

There have been and are different schools of prophecy. The Historical school has had many adherents. According to this school the book of Revelation would in the main be a church history, although also prophetical. Lately the Futurists have gained recognition, and their school has become the most prominent. The Futurists hold that the book of Revelation from chapter 4 belongs to the future. This view would be correct, if modified by holding that the prophecies in Revelation have an historical background. For example, the seals would be the future actual fulfilment having an historical background corresponding to each.

As to principles of interpretation we believe that the grammatical literal is the only reliable and safe one. If figures occur, they should be interpreted according to the laws of grammar under which they belong. The parables have their laws, symbols likewise, and all other figures. As a rule the Bible explains itself. In ordinary life when reading a letter or a book, we first use the literal way. If a letter is written by parents to a child or a youth, would the writer not use plain language? No one would write a letter or a message of importance and use incomprehensible figures. It is claimed that there are many figures of different kinds in the Bible which are hard to understand. But the Bible explains its own figures. Read, for example, Daniel and the interpretations. Study parallels of ideas and words.

We should bear in mind the words in Rev. 1. 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." According to Rev. 22. 10, the book of Revelation should not be a sealed book. The words are the following: "And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand." It does not mean that all the events described in the book would immediately be fulfilled, but the time was at hand when the prophecies would begin to be fulfilled, some sooner, and others later. Watch the signs of the times!

The author heartily thanks Dr. A. W. Kjellstrand for able collaboration in proof reading.

CONRAD EMIL LINDBERG,
Dean of Augustana Theological Seminary.

Rock Island, Ill. Summer season, 1930.

Publisher's Preface

"Watch the signs of the times!" This is the final admonition in the preface of Dean Lindberg's last Work, *The Beacon Lights of Prophecy,* which is hereby presented for the earnest study of Bible students in general and of those especially who are interested in the promises bearing upon the Second Coming of Christ. We are given to attach peculiar significance to the dying words of those whom we love and revere. The above admonition should therefore be borne in upon every earnest Christian with all the weight and authority of one who in the closing hours of his life was privileged, as it were, to cast a glimpse beyond the veil, and to behold with clarified vision the steady and resistless march of world events in their relation to the fulfilment of prophecy and the ushering in of Christ's Kingdom of Glory.

Published posthumously, *The Beacon Lights of Prophecy,* the manuscript of which was completed on the very day Dean Lindberg left Rock Island to seek medical advice, is his last labor of love in behalf of the Church, the Scriptural correctness of whose doctrines he never questioned, and whose best interests he promoted by fifty-six years of faithful and efficient service.

Dr. Conrad Emil Lindberg departed this life on the morning of August 2, 1930, but the influence of his labors will remain with us for generations to come. A. W. KJELLSTRAND.

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Beacon Lights of Prophecy
in the Latter Days

BEACON LIGHTS OF PROPHECY IN THE LATTER DAYS

I. INTRODUCTION

In this Introduction the plan is not to furnish the usual more or less complete Commentary-Introduction or enter into the labyrinth of modern so-called Higher Criticism, but the aim is only to present some plain facts of interest to the general Christian reader and student of prophecy. The unbeliever is not interested in Biblical prophecies, and the skeptically inclined Christian is referred to Christian Apologies and works on Apologetics. And yet the study of fulfilled prophecies may turn doubters to believers. In the prophetical studies of this book the intention is not to describe the fulfilled prophecies, as they are well-known to the observant reader of the Bible and of history both sacred and secular. We will, however, call attention to some of these, especially in case of interrelation and partial fulfillment.

As our prophetical studies under the title and heading Beacon Lights of Prophecy will shed light upon and draw descriptions especially from the prophecies of Daniel, Zechariah and the Revelation of Saint John, our introductory remarks will compass and enter into the meaning of prophecies in other books relating to these last times of the present epoch or at least mark our place on the chart of prophecy.

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON DANIEL, ZECHARIAH, AND THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

1. *Remarks on Daniel.*

The position of Daniel as a prophet was peculiar. He lived and worked in Babylon, not only as a private individual, but also as a prominent statesman and high officer at the royal court. Daniel labored, therefore, not directly among the captives, as the prophet Ezekiel did. Together with other young men of prominence Daniel had taken part in the battle at the siege of Jerusalem and had been carried as a captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the reign of Jehoiakim. Arrived in Babylon, Daniel received the name Belteshazzar. In order that he might become an acceptable page and officer at court, the king ordered that he be enrolled as a student in the royal college, where he studied Chaldaean science during three years. Having finished his studies; he rose to high prominence, the reason of which is described in the historical part of the book. He was highly favored during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and later during the reigns of Belshazzar and the so-called Darius the Mede. By the latter regent he was appointed one of the three head princes who were placed over all the one hundred and twenty governors of the kingdom. When Cyrus became the sole ruler, the dignities and honors of Daniel were continued.

In the latter part of his life Daniel received revelations concerning the future of Israel, the development of the world powers in grand outlines, and the victory of the kingdom of God, corroborating the dream-visions and revelations he had had during the time of the rule of Nebuchadnezzar.

The book of Daniel has been exposed to the attacks of many critics, especially from the beginning of modern destructive criticism, and we can easily understand the motives of such attacks. But modern Christian Apologetics has found mighty weapons to prove the conservative view as to the Biblical-historical Daniel, the unity of the book, and the fact that Daniel actually lived during the time stated in the prophecy. Many of the critics hold that the author was a Jew living in the time of the Maccabees, who desired to cheer his countrymen during the terrible times of Antiochus Epiphanes. The attacks have only served to prove more strongly the correctness of the conservative view.

The prophetical book of Ezekiel proves plainly that Daniel lived during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Compare Ezek. 14. 14, 20 and 28. 3, where Daniel is mentioned along with Noah and Job and his wisdom as above that of the princes of Tyre. If we consider that these utterances of Ezekiel were made many years after Daniel's elevation to the rank of the Chaldean wise men, then it is not surprising that his fame was so well known among the Jewish exiles that Ezekiel could point to him as an illustrious example. This is a plain proof that Daniel lived in the period held by the conservative view.

In the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus, Book 11, chap. 8, we read concerning the dream of Alexander, while yet in Macedonia, how he saw the high priest in his priestly garb and heard his admonition to cross the sea, and his promise in regard to being victorious over the Persians. And Alexander was convinced as to the divine origin of the dream, when he, approaching Jerusalem, was met by a procession headed by the high priest in the garb of the vision. Alexander entered the city and sacrificed to the God of the Jews. We read further: "And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended." This proves that the book of Daniel existed before the time of Alexander the Great and, therefore, long before the time of the Maccabees. If the higher critics belittle such testimony, it only proves the weakness of their case.

Some critics contend that the book of Daniel was not composed during the captivity, because Greek expressions found in the book prove a later origin. But these expressions are very few and relate to names of musical instruments. That such names were used at the time of Nebuchadnezzar is easily explained when we consider the intercourse between the inhabitants of Upper Asia and the Ionians of Asia Minor, and the fact that in the army of Nebuchadnezzar was found the brother of Alcaeus. Further, according to Abydenus, quoted in Eusebius, Greek soldiers followed the Assyrian Esarhaddon on his march through Asia. The excavations of Nineveh proved beyond a doubt that there was interrelation and commercial intercourse with Greece long before Daniel.

Contradictions are also pointed out, but they are only seemingly such. In Dan. 1. 1 it is stated that the Babylonian king came up and besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim, while in Jeremiah the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar is given as occurring in the fourth year. Without referring to the Hebrew verb which makes it clear, it is explained in the following way: The king and his army started from Babylon in the third year of Jehoiakim and advanced upon Jerusalem the fourth year. Necho, the king of Egypt, having made Jehoiakim his vassal king, set forth on an expedition against the Assyrians as far as the Euphrates. As Nineveh had fallen and the Assyrians in fact were subjects to the Chaldeans, Nabopolassar was compelled to attack the invading Egyptians. He sent his son Nebuchadnezzar against the Egyptian king Necho and defeated him at Carchemish in the first month of the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and in the ninth month of the same year he besieged Jerusalem. As Nabopolassar in the meantime had died, Nebuchadnezzar hurried home to Babylon and ascended the throne. But there is no contradiction in the statement in Dan. 2. 1 that Daniel already in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar interpreted the dream of the king, as Daniel was to study three years before his appearance at court, because Nebuchadnezzar was coregent and had not ascended the throne at the time of the siege of Jerusalem. Consequently there was ample time for Daniel to complete his studies and appear before the king in the second year of his reign.

Critics also bring forth against the genuineness of the book, that Belshazzar is said to be the last king before the Medo-Persian dynasty, when according to profane history it was Nabonidus, and that Nebuchadnezzar is called the father of Belshazzar in Dan. 5. 11. The latter problem is solved by the Hebrew or Aramaic as the word for father and son is not limited to the immediate preceding father or following son. According to the Hebrew and

Aramaic idiom the text is perfectly correct, although it may not sound so in our translations.—As to the last king being Nabonidus and not Belshazzar, there is no contradiction, because Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and co-regent, and during the absence of the father, regent. Besides, according to modern research, when Nabonidus was taken prisoner by Cyrus, Belshazzar was the actual king. According to the newly found inscriptions and chronicles, the army under the direct leadership of Gobryas entered the city of Babylon, and Nabonidus, being a prisoner, ceased to rule. Later, Cyrus himself entered. During the interval Belshazzar had fortified himself in the inner parts of the city, probably in the great palace of Nebuchadnezzar which was built as a fortress in a fortified city and protected by walls and moats. Nearly four months elapsed before Cyrus and Gobryas with their army divisions were able to enter and become victorious. In the chronicles found during modern excavations it is mentioned that the son of the king was slain, which refers to Belshazzar. Compare the feast of Belshazzar as related in Dan. 5.

The city of Babylon was taken 538, and the final victory was probably won in the latter part of October or the beginning of November. But the destructive critics have based an attack on the genuineness of the book of Daniel upon the statement that Darius the Mede received the kingdom. It is claimed that this does not agree with the statements in profane history. According to the Cyropaedia of Xenophon, Darius the Mede is identical with Cyaxares II, the father-in-law of Cyrus. Cyaxares gave Media as a dowry to Cyrus, who offered his father-in-law a palace in Babylon and the government, while he was engaged in completing the conquests. In fact they were co-regents. It is, therefore, said that Darius received the kingdom. But why is Cyaxares called Darius in Daniel? The bearing of two names and titles was very common in the Medo-Persian dynasties. Xenophon has given the Median name and title and Daniel the Persian, but to make it clear the word Mede is added. On account of the lately found inscriptions many hold that Gobryas may be the same as Darius the Mede, but in any case there is no valid disagreement between profane or sacred history. Cyrus ruled alone from the year 536 B.C., which was also the year when the Babylonian captivity ended. In the Inscription of Cyrus reference is made to the deliverance of the Jews. This verifies the statement in Ezra as to the liberation of the Jews in the first year of Cyrus.

The climax of all proofs, that the book of Daniel is genuine, is reached in the references of Christ Himself to Daniel's prophecies, e. g. in the 24th chapter of Mt. 15th verse, where He speaks of the "abomination of desolation." Christ would never have referred to Daniel as He did, if the book of Daniel had not been genuine and the fully inspired Word of God.

2. *Remarks on Zechariah.*

Zechariah was of priestly descent, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo, who according to Neh. 12 was one of the heads of the priests and of their brethren, who came up from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Probably Berechiah had died early and Zechariah became the immediate representative of Iddo, wherefore he was called the son of Iddo. According to chapter 2. 6 he was a young man at the time of the visions. His first address occurred in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, 520–519 B.C., two months after the first prophecy of Haggai. The two prophets were, therefore, contemporary for a time.

The restoration of the temple had been of pressing interest to the company of about 50,000, who returned from the exile in the year 536. The foundation stone was laid the following year. But the building was delayed fourteen or sixteen years on account of troubles with the Samaritans. Darius Hystaspis renewed and confirmed the decree of Cyrus. From Haggai we infer that the religious feelings of the people had changed, and that they busied themselves with their own affairs, wherefore it required mighty appeals to rouse them from their apathy. The efforts of the two prophets were successful, and the temple was finished 515 B.C., twenty-one years after the end of the Babylonian exile.

If the prophet in his first prophetical utterances had in mind a reference to the existing circumstances of his time, it does not follow that the real scope of the visions is limited. His utterances take in not only the whole character of the people, their existing relations and dangers, but also their future history and their influence on the history of the world. Prophecy always brings together the near and the remote, is logical, if not chronological, and its contents and bearing stretch far beyond the immediate circumstances that also may be presented in the prophetic addresses.

All we know for certain concerning the more private history of Zechariah amounts to little. In regard to the closing portion of his life we only know that he died at an advanced age and was buried near to Haggai.

His prophetic book has two main divisions, the first ch. 1–8 and the second ch. 9–14. The first part is divided into three prophetic utterances: 1. 1–6 is an introduction; 1. 7—6. 15 contain the night visions and an appendix. The appendix recites a symbolic transaction, the crowning of Joshua or the functions of the priest-king Branch. Ch. 7 contains a rebuke, and ch. 8 a blessing, uttered in the year 517. The second main part consists of two prophetic burdens; ch. 9–11 and 12–14. The first division seems to be an outline of God's providence until the first advent and the rejection of the Saviour, and the second is an outlook into the future until the second advent and to the end of the present age.

The genuineness of the first main part has never been seriously doubted, but the second division or ch. 9–14 has been exposed to criticism. The question of doubt seems not to have been raised before the middle of the seventeenth century. Joseph Mede was the first critic on the ground that the passage in 11. 11–12 is quoted in Mt. 27. 9–10 as the language of Jeremiah, but there are several satisfactory explanations; one of these is that the volume used by the transcriber had the title Jeremiah as the first book in the collection of several prophetical writings, and it was usual to quote the name given in the general inscription of a collection. Most of the critical arguments against the genuineness of Zechariah are so weak that they are hardly worthy of notice. Some of the traditional arguments for the genuineness of the whole book are: There is no other Zechariah that could be the author; the framers of the Canon, all of them, included ch. 14 as belonging to Zechariah; the Canon was completed before the version of the Septuagint; Matthew quotes from Zechariah and thereby recognizes the book of Zechariah as belonging to the Canon; the mention of Ephraim does not prove the distinct existence of the kingdom of Israel, but designates a part of the existing population, just as Mal. 2. 11 uses the term Israel and no one will deny the post-exilic authorship of the book of Malachi. Not only the learned scribes in the days of Ezra, but also the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the seminaries of Tiberias and Babylon, the authors of the Targum and the learned Rabbies down to the Reformation accepted the whole book of 14 chapters as genuine. All these scholars represented were more able to consider the form of evidence than these modern so-called higher critics. The difference of style in the second main part of the book is easily explained, because the lofty poetic description of the visions was natural in the time of youth and truly adapted to the scenes he saw, and the deep prophetic insight, the grandeur and elevation of the latter division of the book correspond with his more advanced age and the topics treated. Another proof may be mentioned, namely, that Zechariah was acquainted with the later prophets. His allusions in ch. 9–14 to Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the latter part of Isaiah convinced at last even DeWette that Zechariah was the author of the whole book.

We can rest assured that the entire book of the prophet Zechariah is genuine and the Word of God.

3. *Remarks on the Revelation of St. John.*

The book is called the Revelation of St. John, because the apostle was the medium through which the revelation was communicated to us, but the first inscription of the book is The Revelation of Jesus Christ or The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Most Christians treat this book as if it were the Apocrypha of the New Testament. The term Apochrypha, means something hidden, but Apocalypse means what is revealed. The Apocalypse is, therefore, the manifestation or revealment of Jesus Christ. The book is not a revelation of The Revelation by Jesus Christ, because He is not only revealing, but revealed. The title of the book, "The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ," proves that the chief theme is the appearing of Jesus Christ. In 1 Cor. 1. 7 we read: "Waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in 1 Pet.1. 7: "at the apocalypse (appearing) of Jesus Christ." The book of Revelation describes this appearing with its presuppositions, developments, surrounding circumstances and final results. "The Lord's day" in Rev. 1. 10 is not limited to an ordinary Sunday as if John saw all the visions on a Sunday or the common conception of the Lord's day, but the meaning is "the day of the Lord" so often described in the Bible. John was, so to say, transferred in spirit to the Day of the Lord and was mystically down among the scenes of the last times. The day of the Lord is not an ordinary day of 24 hours, but may be many days or even years. The first coming of Christ was not a sojourn of one day, but was called "the days of the Son of man" and extended over a period of about 33 years. How long time the Second Coming will cover, we do not know; some say from seven to three and a half years, and others, who hold the literal millennial view, more than a thousand years; but it is certain that the Second Advent is a period and not an ordinary day. All the prophecies in regard to the Second Coming must be fulfilled just as the prophecies concerning the First Advent.

In a certain sense the book is an apocalypse from the beginning to the end. The first chapter is a glorious appearance. And the second and third chapters are a manifestation of Christ in His relations, even in judgments, to the churches and a delineation of the character of the seven church periods up to the Second Advent. Then follow heavenly scenes of Christ's appearance and aspect behind the veil, also revealing the final outcome of the seals, trumpets, and vials or bowls of wrath. Christ and the heavenly messengers appear in the many scenes of judgments; Michael and his angels are seen fighting with the devil or dragon and his angels; the most awful personal manifestations of evil appear in the rule of the beasts and consequent persecutions; the greatest tribulation the world ever saw transpires; the great world-City and other cities are destroyed; the greatest battle of the world takes place at Armageddon; awful signs are seen in the heavenly bodies and the sky; Christ appears in the clouds with His celestial retinue and army, judgments of the living occur and of the beasts, and Satan is bound; Christ is victorious, the first resurrection and translation of the saints are completed; the Kingdom of final justice is ushered in; all the dead are raised; the white throne of final judgments blazes forth; the horrible lake of fire, in which the devil and the wicked are cast, is shown; and after witnessing world convulsions, we see revealed to us the grandest scenes of creation in the new heaven and earth, and we hear the grand finale from the throne, when the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is shown coming down out of heaven from God to be the capital of the eternal Kingdom of Glory.

When was this wonderful book written? There have been different views, the holders of the so called Preterist view claim that the book was written while Nero was emperor. Most of the members of this school hold that Nero was the Beast or Antichrist. But Nero, although a cruel tyrant and a prominent type of Antichrist, limited his persecutions mostly to Rome and we have no record that Nero resorted to exile as a punishment, but it was the practice of Domitian to punish by banishment. There is no event pictured in the book corresponding to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the tribulation connected with the siege of the city and its horrible fall was local and could not be the actual great tribulation which will be world wide, but we have in the terrible suffering at Jerusalem a type of the great tribulation to come during the dominion of the Beast. The holders of the early date also argue that, if Jerusalem was destroyed before the book was written, the author would have noticed that awful event, but we must remember that John in this book was not a historian recording the past, and that when he wrote this book of prophecy about 25 years had passed, wherefore there was no reason to review what befell the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The arguments for the early date drawn from internal evidence are weak in comparison with the proofs for the later date. The evidence for the later date or that the book was written about 95 A.D. is very strong. Before the fourth century there is no real variation in the external evidence as all statements support the conclusion that the Apostle John was banished to Patmos by the emperor Domitian in the year 95 A.D.

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and that he saw the visions on this island and wrote the Apocalypse there. Irenæus is the principal witness. He was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp of the Apostle John. When Irenæus in his writings discusses the meaning of 666 in the Apocalypse, he continues: "For if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in the present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision; for that was seen not very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign." Some have twisted the translation 'that' to 'he' to defend the opinion of the early date and also to further their view that the Second Coming occured at the destruction of Jerusalem. But in doing this they are like a drowning person grasping at a straw to save himself. The view of Irenæus was upheld by Clemens, Tertulian, Victorinus, Eusebius and Jerome. The internal evidences are also very strong, but those interested in these in order to become more convinced may consult Introductions to the Bible and Commentaries. It seems to us that the external evidence from the time of Irenæus is so strong that no more arguments are necessary to prove the later date. And as to authorship it is self-evident that the mere statement, "John to the seven churches" and "I John" could not refer to any other John than the Apostle John, because no ordinary presbyter would have been so self-arrogant and audacious as to call himself John without explanation, when all Christians knew that only John the Apostle was so well-known in Asia and all over among Christians as to call himself simply John just as Paul called himself simply Paul. We may, therefore, be fully assured that the Apostle John was the author, and also that the book was written about 95 A.D. In reading this book we have convincing proofs that its original text is the Word of God and plenarily inspired. Read, therefore, chap. 22. 18, 19! And do not forget chap. 1. 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

II. THE FIRST GOAL OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

SECTION TWO

The Advent of the Saviour and Redeemer.

1. *The Advent of the Messiah from the Old Testament Viewpoint.*

The Old Testament prophets made no distinction between a First and Second Advent, probably not understanding that the Advent would be in two parts or phases. We find, therefore, that events which await fulfilment are mentioned in the same connection with events fulfilled at the First Advent. As an example we may call attention to Isaiah 61. Notice the transition from what belongs to the First Advent to the doings of the Second Advent. The break occurs in the second verse at the point indicated by the ellipsis marks: "To proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, * * * and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." The last two phases and what follows refer to the Second Advent. Christ, in reading in the synogogue, stopped at the break, because He knew, and He said: To day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Lk. 4. 19–21. In reading He ended with: "To proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor," because the remainder would be fulfilled at the Second Advent. Such breaks occur in other places of the O. T. Scriptures. Another instance in Isaiah may be noted: in ch. 9 a break between verses 6 and 7 is evident and also at a previous point in the same chapter. John the Baptist, who according to Christ was more than a prophet, did not understand the two phases of the Advent, and for that reason he sent his disciples to Christ and inquired: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" John had preached like the O. T. prophets, including what belonged to the second phase, as when he said: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat in the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." Mt. 3. 12. This refers to the Second Advent, but John makes no distinction, as the Holy Spirit had not revealed it to him. When Christ, therefore, did not also act as a judge according to prophecy, John was perplexed and sent his messengers to inquire, but we are sure that John was satisfied by the answer and the greeting from the Lord. In some chapters of the Old Testament the prophecies refer to both comings, but in others only to one.

It is, therefore, important to examine the texts closely.

All the prophecies in regard to the First Advent were fulfilled in the incarnated Logos or Christ. What has not been fulfilled, therefore, belongs to the Second Coming or Advent. Among the prophecies fulfilled we only mention some of the leading ones. Such are the prophecy of Shiloh, Gen. 49. 10; the Prophet like unto Moses, Dt. 18. 15; the Mighty God, etc., Is. 9. 6; the Servant of Jehovah in His sufferings, etc., Isa. 53; the Coming of the Messiah and His death, Dan. 9. 25 and beginning of the 26th verse; the place of His birth Bethlehem Ephrathah, Mic. 5. 2; His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Zech. 9. 9; and notice besides the Messianic Psalms entering into some remarkable details in the experience of the Lord. When all these prophecies, relating to the first phase of the Advent, were literally fulfilled, it is reasonable to expect that the remainder, belonging to the second phase of the Advent, also will be fulfilled.

2. *The Second Advent of Christ from the New Testament Viewpoint.*

When Christ ascended into heaven without fulfilling all the prophecies relating to the Advent, it proved clearly the fact that there would be another coming, when all the remaining prophecies would be fulfilled. Although the disciples had repeatedly been informed that there was to be a future Coming of the Son of Man in glory, it was evidently not clear to them, when we consider their question before the Ascension: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said unto them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority." Shortly after this answer Christ visibly ascended, and two heavenly visitants appeared, and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." Then they began to understand and after Pentecost, having received the Holy Spirit, everything became more clear and fully understood. Then new revelations were received as we know from the Acts, Epistles, and the book of Revelation.

But, although the prophecies concerning the Second Advent are plain and clear, heretical teachers and doubting Christians have questioned whether a personal and visible return of Christ will take place. The classic and categorical statement above quoted from Acts 1. 11 proves decisively that there will be a Second Advent, and that this future Coming of Christ will be both personal and visible. The return of Christ is not spiritual and individual as at our death; nor is the Second Coming only providential as great historical judgments and emancipations are. The Second Coming is as real as the First Advent. It is personal, clearly visible, glorious, and terrible to the wicked. Some skeptical minds cannot comprehend how we can see Christ at His return with fleshly eyes. But they do not consider that Christ in His resurrection body was seen many times by mortal and fleshly eyes. Christ did not receive another body at the Ascension. He ascended in the resurrection body and will return in it. The appearance in glory is not another body, but only another condition of the same body which is intrinsically glorious, as the humanity of Christ is permeated by His divinity and the divine attributes given to His human nature, wherefore Christ as divine-human is able to appear in different aspects. When He appears in His transfigured body, all eyes will see Him just as the disciples saw Him during the forty days before the Ascension.

In order to correct some misunderstandings of Scripture passages in regard to the Second Coming of Christ, we will mention that some hold that this coming took place at the destruction of Jerusalem. Their arguments are based on passages like these: Mt. 16. 27, 28: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished," Mt. 24. 34. Others may be noted as we happen to meet them. As to the statement in Mt. 16. 27 coming before the contents in verse 28, we should note the parallels in Mark and Luke, which prove that there is no attempt to give a chronological consecutive order of eschatological events, but the content of verse 27 is simply an argument in the Gospel of Matthew just as such an argument may be used in a treatise or sermon. Matthew wrote his Gospel in the first place to the Jews to convince them that Jesus was the Christ. His object was not to present in logical order eschatological topics. In studying parallels we must be careful to investigate if given passages are true parallels. As an example it is evident that the kingdom of God has two phases just as the Advent. We must, therefore, expect verses referring to either and there can be no contradiction if we find the true parallels. A careful student of the Bible cannot fail to notice that the passages in regard to the kingdom of God are of two leading kinds. Some describe a kingdom of a spiritual kind and other passages depict a kingdom of a glorious external appearance and manifestation, although not like worldly political kingdoms. There will be no confusion and misunderstanding if we escape false parallels. Before the judgment seat of Pilate Christ speaks of the first phase of the kingdom in the words: "My kingdom is not of this world," etc., John 18. 36, 37. Before the high priest Jesus solemnly asserts that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and adds: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." This refers to His glorious visible return. This saying on oath of Christ was not fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, and it has not been fulfilled yet. When the kingdom has two phases, does Mt. 16. 28 refer to the first phase or the last? Plainly to the first phase, if we follow the law of true parallels. Those who hold that this verse refers to the Second Advent are compelled to argue for the belief that the Second Coming occurred in the lifetime of some of those standing listening to the words: "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Some interpreters say that this verse refers to the Transfiguration which prefigured the glorious coming of the Son of man in His kingdom, as the story of the Transfiguration is related in the context. The study of the true parallels solves the problem. If we compare Mark 9. 1 as a parallel, it is only stated: "Till they see the kingdom of God come with power." In Lk. 9. 27 the parallel reads: "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." These parallels prove beyond a doubt that the reference concerns the first phase of the kingdom of God. This becomes clear, when we consider all the passages referring to a Second Coming of a glorious nature. Such a coming has not occurred. It is preposterous to say that such a glorious coming took place at the destruction of Jerusalem. The Bible contains too many passages in regard to a glorious Advent of Christ to place such an event in the past. Mt. 16. 28 and its true parallels refer to events in the First Coming. The disciples who should not taste death, till they saw the kingdom of Christ, did live to see the risen Christ, His Ascension to His throne and the ushering in of the kingdom of God in its first phase, which will continue to the Second Advent or to the close of the period of the Second Advent. Christ rules now invisibly and is present with His Church "alway, even unto the end of the world." This end of the age did not close at the destruction of Jerusalem. If that judgment had been the end of the aeon before the Second Advent, then many parts of the New Testament would be meaningless.

Let us also notice the misconception in regard to the passage in Mt. 24. 34: "This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished." It is claimed by those, who hold the view of the Second Advent as in the past about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, that the word in Greek for generation only means an ordinary lifetime; but all students of the original, who are not biased by the wrong conception mentioned, know that the Greek word also means or is used to mean race or nation. Prominent scholars attest it. The sense of the word in a given passage must be tested by the ordinary laws of interpretation. All the unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible could not be crowded in so as to be fulfilled in the lifetime of the people, to whom Christ spoke. And if that had been possible, there is no record of such events having taken place in the lifetime of the disciples. As the Bible is the Word of God and the writers therefore were inspired, authors like Paul and John could not have been misled in their prohecies, many of which have not yet been fulfilled. Even if the Revelation of John had been written before 70 A.D., these prophecies were not fulfilled in that period. But it is almost positively proved that the Revelation of John was written in the last decade of the first century. If generation in the above quoted verse means an ordinary lifetime and is past as the wrong exegesis would have it, a large division of the New Testament would be like reading history. Even if we should forego to translate generation (the original for it) by nation or race, which would be perfectly legitimate, we must carefully note the time-connection in Mt. 24. 34 and parallels. Note also the contexts. It is evident that Christ spoke as if describing by anticipation the time of fulfilment. He transplants the hearers and readers to the time when these things take place. "Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished," and read further the whole context connection. He refers to the generation living at the fulfilment of the events mentioned in verse 15. If the generation living at the time Christ spoke these words thought that the prophecy might be fulfilled in their time, it does not prove that it would be fulfilled during the then living generation, because it is a collective saying just as in 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52, when Paul uses the word "we"; but other passages prove that he did not expect to live in the period of the Second Advent. Compare also 2 Tim. 4. 6–8, where Paul shortly before his death speaks of his impending departure and looks forward to the appearing of the Lord to judge, and how Christ would reward the faithful with the crown of righteousness "at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." This rewarding or giving the crown does not occur at death, but at the future appearing of the Lord. When we read the epistles of Paul, we see plainly that he did not expect the Second Advent in his lifetime.

In this connection it may also be worth while to correct the misunderstanding of Lk. 17. 20, 21: "And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." The interpreters who hold the erroneous views discussed and, therefore, also reject the second phase of the glorious kingdom of God at the Second Advent, base their opinions also on the verses quoted. They twist the meaning of the original for "observation." The answer is determined by the question "When the kingdom of God cometh?" The Pharisees put the question and were thinking of an external earthly kingdom, entirely ignoring the partly spiritual character of the kingdom and its heavenly aspect in glory. To the Pharisees there was only one aspect, namely, the earthly Jewish kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital. Christ could, therefore, only answer as He did. The Pharisees had no interest in the first phase of the kingdom and had a wrong view of the second glorious phase of the kingdom of God. How could it be expected that Christ would answer directly their question, when He did not answer curious questions of the disciples! We remember the answer of Christ just prior to His ascension, when they asked about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. The Pharisees wanted to know when their conception should be realized, etc. Christ did not answer the direct question, but called attention to the two phases of the kingdom and the manner of the coming of the kingdom. Read the context. The meaning of the original for "observation" is that the kingdom of God does not come so as to be observed like the coming or founding of an earthly kingdom. It will come like the Advent. Even the First Advent came unobserved except to a few. The ushering in of the kingdom of Grace did not come to be observed as a worldly ordinary kingdom, and yet there were evident proofs and evidences of it to the students of the prophecies. The first coming of the kingdom was sudden and unexpected by the Jews at large and not understood by the world, but was in the midst of men through the activity of the Church of God, and only the true Christians comprehend how the kingdom of God had appeared to prepare the way for the second phase of the kingdom at the glorious Second Advent of Christ. But when Christ was questioned by the Pharisees, He knew that they ignored Him and only hoped for a kingdom of their own earthly expectations, and had no interest in the kingdom as it was already among them. When He says according to our English revised version in the 21st verse: "The kingdom of God is within you," it is self-evident that He did not mean that the kingdom of God was *within* the Pharisees. What is the correct rendering? It may be as many hold "among you" and others say within the elect nation. But the main answer of Christ to the question of the Pharisees was the information that the kingdom would come suddenly. The following context proves that clearly. Note verse 24: "For as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in his day." Pay special attention to verses 28–31 and notice the climax in suddenness, unexpectedness and quickness without observation as related in verses 34–35. There will be many signs to warn us that the Second Advent is near, and these signs will be more clear to watchful Christians who love the return of Christ, but the nominal Christians will not notice, and some otherwise earnest believers will be unwise in thinking that Christ will delay His coming and, therefore, not study the signs of the times. But the signs of the times as giving evidence of the approach of the coming of Christ and His kingdom do not mean that the kingdom comes with observation like an earthly kingdom, but when it suddenly comes, it will surely be seen. The kingdom of Grace or the kingdom in its first phase came unexpectedly and suddenly, but having come, it was and is clearly exhibited in the work of the Church of God. It is both invisible and visible. The kingdom of God at the Second Advent will not be hidden, but visible as the Advent will be glorious and visible.

Although we could have explained the meaning of Mt. 10. 23 in connection with Mt. 16. 28 by the same true parallels, we desire to call attention to this verse by itself, as many Bible readers are confused and do not understand readily that this verse refers to the First Advent. Let us first quote the verse: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." It is true that the First Coming began with the incarnation and the birth of Christ, but the First Advent of the Son of man takes in all the leading events, and in the passage quoted Christ refers to events which more distinctly mark the First Advent or the coming of the kingdom in its first phase. Therefore, some interpreters refer this to the transfiguration which occurred after the charge to the disciples, and others to the resurrection which sealed the First Coming and the kingdom in its first phase. As the passage discussed is a true parallel to the passages relating to the Coming in the first phase of the kingdom, it seems to us that the saying was fulfilled in the principal occurrences in the First Coming of the Son of man. Here may be added the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, when Christ entered as king in the first phase of His kingdom. This was a fulfilment of prophecy and so accepted and recognized by the multitude. Mt. 21. 1–11. This took place before the disciples had finished their missionary journey, and it meets the conditions of the passage. The public coming of the Son of man as the king is a leading event and is shortly after followed by the great foundation-work of the kingdom, when the Son of man suffers a vicarious death for the salvation of man. And having occomplished the great reconciliation, Christ is raised from the dead and appears as the conqueror over death, the devil, and the kingdom of darkness. The Son of man comes forth from the tomb as King indeed. Every act in His exaltation is a stepping stone to His throne, and He ascends to heaven, from where He rules in His kingdom of Grace. In Acts 3. 19–21 we read from the sermon of Peter how God will again send Christ Jesus "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things." This refers to the Second Advent and the second phase of the kingdom, the kingdom of Glory. And in regard to the Second Advent and the kingdom of Glory there will be no confusion, if we follow the law of true parallels. We have already referred to this fact.

Further study will prove more and more the same law of interpretation.

We will also call attention in Rev. 1. 1 and 3 to the expressions: "shortly come to pass" and "the time is at hand." These are prophetical words or phrases which do not imply a human way of counting. The expressions, therefore, do not support the Preterists, who maintain the view that the prediction was fulfilled within a short time after the apostle wrote. The Historical interpretation holds that it means "before long" in the light of 2 Pet. 3. 8 and Lk. 18. 8, where in the latter passage the word "speedily" according to the context implies a long delay according to human modes of figuring, but not a long delay from the higher viewpoint. Some Futurists claim that "shortly" has the meaning a swift fulfilment when the events begin. There is no contradiction from the prophetical view and no conflict with the common prophetical formula, if we should interpret the phrases to mean that the events would soon begin to be fulfilled one after another, even if the events should take a long time to develop. If we consider the seven churches in their meaning, the contents of the book were materializing already in the apostolic age. Although the prophecies present and depict the climax in the future, there is a historical background of development. This seems to be the best explanation.

From the foregoing explanations and discussions it is evident that the New Testament teaches that there is a Second Advent, and in considering the prophecies which must be fulfilled before the Second Advent period, it is clear that the Second Coming has not occurred and is, therefore, in the future. The doctrine of the return of Christ is a very prominent doctrine in the New Testament. One thirtieth of the contents of the N. T. refers more or less to the Second Advent period and questions related to it.

From the N. T. viewpoint the Second Advent of Christ must imply a period just as the First Advent covered years. This period may be short or long, depending upon the many prophecies to be fulfilled. It is self-evident and clear that the Second Advent cannot be accomplished in an ordinary day, if we consider God's methods at the First Coming of Christ. Think of the many prophecies which were fulfilled at different times during the First Advent! Then study the varied prophecies to be fulfilled at the return of Christ. Besides, the nearest signs heralding the Second Advent may be counted as belonging to the period of the coming Advent. The question as to time is not what God can do in a day, but how He usually works. Peter says: "That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It proves what God can do and what He may do in His wisdom. If the Lord wishes He can extend the Second Advent to cover a thousand years and thereby solve the disputed question of the Millennium. God did not reveal to the prophets of the O. T. the extent of the period of the First Advent. There have been many guesses and calculations as to the coming Advent in regard to the length of time, varying from nearly seven years up to over a thousand years. But from the analogy of the period of the First Advent the coming Advent must cover some years.

3. *The Certainty of the Personal and Visible Return of Christ.*

Because of the seeming delay, some doubting Christians are impatient, and others are led astray by views we have related as held by the Preterists or by Post-millennarianism ideas. The latter view would postpone the Advent beyond more than a thousand years. Such a doctrine is unbiblical and was not held by the early fathers. All the passages showing the need of watching and the spiritual and moral condition of the world at the Second Coming prove that a thousand years of a blessed millennium will not precede the return of Christ. According to Acts 3. 19–21 Christ's return will bring refreshing and restoration of all things. The clear meaning of these verses proves that following upon and not preceding the coming again of Christ "the times of restoration of all things" will occur. These verses also prove the certainty of the visible return of Christ. If there were no other passages, these verses would be sufficient proof that there will be a second return of Christ. But the promises of His return are many. At the Ascension the two heavenly messengers said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." This verse in Acts 1. 11 cannot be twisted to disprove the personal and visible return of Christ as some have tried to do. If we should, as some have done, exclude "in like manner" it would not prove the contention of the deniers of a visible and personal return of Christ. The deniers of a personal and visible return contend that the Greek words should be translated the same as in Mt. 23. 37; Lk. 13. 34; Acts 7. 28; 2 Tim. 3. 8. If we translated it "shall come as," it would, nevertheless, support the visible and personal return of Christ. Besides, the visible and personal return of Christ is taught in other passages. Some claim that many of the passages are spectacular in their prophetical style and point to the prophecy of Joel as fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit without any changes in the physical heavens, etc., and yet Peter according to Acts 2. 16–21 claims that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, although it is evident that only a part was fulfilled at Pentecost. But the quoting of the *whole* prophecy by Peter does not prove the detailed accomplishment of every item at that time, because the O. T. prophecies in this case are like the prophecies in relation to the Advent, one part referring to the First Coming and another part pointing to the Second Advent. In the same way there are prophecies concerning the outpouring of the Spirit at both Advents. And never forget the literal fulfilments of prophecies in the First Advent period, although many had expected a figurative fulfilment according to their figurative method of interpretation.

Even if there are expressions of a symbolical nature in the prophecies, and some poetical coloring, the prophetic word is on the whole to be interpreted verbally. Common sense, the context, and specific directions will help to solve the problems. If we have studied Hermeneutics carefully, the principles of interpretation will bridge over many difficult places. In regard to the prophecies of Christ's return the statements are so plain that there is no room for doubt. The promises of the return of Christ are so many and direct that few doctrines have so many and clear proof-passages. Therefore, we do not need to quote a large number. All Bible readers can find the passages by using a Concordance or by diligent study of the entire Bible.

We have already called attention to two leading passages in Acts 1 and 3. Let us quote the words of 3. 20, 21: "And that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old." There has been no restoration of all things so far. What is meant by the restoration will take place when Christ returns. We, therefore, may be assured that both events belong to the future. Let us also notice some other passages which plainly and concretely teach the future and visible coming again of Christ. In Mt. 26. 63, 64, Christ on oath before the high priest affirms not only that He was the Son of God, but also His visible and glorious return in the words: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." If this affirmation on oath is read in the light of the parables on the Second Coming and of the eschatological discourses, then, if language means anything, it is clear as daylight that Christ will return personally and visibly. The following two expressions in 1 Th. 1. 10 and 3. 13, "to wait for his Son from heaven" and "at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints," would have no real meaning, if the Lord did not return personally and visibly. Add to this the revealed mystery in 1 Cor.

15. 51, 52 and 1 Th. 4. 13–17, where we read about the catching up to meet the Lord and also "will God bring with him." Read also 2 Th. 2, regarding "the lawless one" whom the Lord will bring to naught "by the manifestation of his coming." It is nothing hidden and secret, but a clear and visible manifestation. We will quote the 16th verse of 1 Th. 4: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." This cannot mean individual coming to the Christians at death. It is evidently a descent from heaven at the resurrection of believers, who with the living and watching saints are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord at His Second Advent and to appear with Him at His revelation. Consider also the many passages relating to the day of the Lord, which all prove beyond a doubt the visible return of Christ and the coming of His glorious Kingdom. Every Bible reader can continue to look up Bible verses confirming the same doctrine. If Christ's return is not to be personal and visible and His glorious Kingdom a reality, the book of Revelation would be a greater mystery than many make it. The last book in the Bible is the new Genesis and the Apocalypse of Christ. It is the book that preeminently treats of the day of the Lord. If Christ should not return according to prophecy, the book

would be a New Testament apocrypha and not an apocalypse. But when this book is the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ at His Second Advent, this whole book becomes the climax in the proofs for the personal, visible and glorious return of the Christ as Redeemer.

SECTION THREE

THE GENERAL SIGNS OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

If the doctrine of the Second Advent is like the morning star heralding the new day, we may say that many of the signs of the times are like the lighthouses and beacon lights on the shore of the great sea. Some signs of the time in which men have lived or live may be called *remote,* because they are of a nature which may occur during the whole New Testament period and yet may be intensified as the last days draw near. The contents of the five seals (Rev. 6) depict such signs of an extended run, even entering into the 6th and 7th seals, because moral victories through preaching and teaching, and also false teaching will as heretofore continue up to the very end; likewise war, famine, pestilence, persecution, etc., will go on, and sometimes so intensely that people expect the judgment. In Lk. 21. 9–11 we read: "And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified; for these things must needs come to pass first; but the end is not immediately," etc. Compare also parallel passages. *Less remote* signs are such as the great apostasy, increasing infidelity in different forms, security on account of the wonderful human progress in science, arts, inventions, and human power over nature. To the less remote signs must be added the progress of the true Church by the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the printed and open Bible, the world-wide missionary activities, the philanthropic movements, and the combined inner and home missions. In regard to the great apostasy Paul writes plainly in 2 Th. 2. 3: „Let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away comes first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The apostasy, as we can see in fulfilled historical prophecies, refers to the harlot or false church as revealed in Roman-Greek Catholicism, heresies within the Church, Mohammedanism and antichristian modernism.

There are also *nearer* signs. Among these we call attention to Spiritualism, false science, renewal of black magic and other heretical practices. In 1 Tim. 4. 1–3 we find reference to such signs. Read the whole reference, but we quote the first verse: "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." Compare 2 Tim. 3. 1–8 which describes the grievous times of the latter days. Other nearer signs are the entrance into the Laodicean period of spiritual lukewarmness. The Laodicean period also means a political democracy that may develop into mob rule or lawlessness.

Whether it develops into a good democracy or lawless, radical socialism, it means a period of the power of the common people, when emperors and kings lose their crowns during world-wars and revolutions. It is a period as depicted by the feet of the dream-image of Nebuchadnezzar showing a combination of iron and miry clay, which do not naturally mingle or mix. It is also a period of great contrarieties and contrasts, when both good and evil, church and world, true Christianity and antichristianity approach their climax. These nearer signs, which extend into the nearest, belong to the time when the kingdom of darkness undermines the faith in the plenary inspiration of the Bible by destructive Biblical criticism. If Satan succeeds in convincing people that the Bible is only human, then the foundations of Christianity are undermined. To these nearer signs belong also an extensive increase in all kinds of societies, good and bad, unions and leagues, international socialism and red radicalism. When men do not heed the Word of God, they will become antagonistic to divine institutes, and lawlessness takes the place of order. When men will not listen to the inspired Bible, they will be led on in wickedness by the inspirations of demons. But in such a time of contraries, Christian civilization will spread its influence all over the world and the good forces of the Christian nations will be marshaled against the lawlessness of the nations. To the nearer signs belong also great political covenants and leagues of world-wide importance. Among the greater signs bordering upon and entering into the period of the nearest or proximate signs may especially be mentioned the fall of the Turkish empire and the deliverance of Palestine from the Turkish yoke, by which the return of the Jews in larger numbers will be possible. Fulfilments of prophecies in this line already began in the first part of the 19th century and the last world war from 1914 led to the occupancy by the English in the year 1918 of the Promised land, which evidently is the end of the Turkish power in Palestine.—The last signs of the time announcing the approach of the Second Advent period we call the *proximate* or *nearest* signs. The larger return of the Jews, but most of them in unbelief, in order to rebuild the Jewish state and the temple, is one of these signs. Not a very large immigration will take place at first, but their colonization in the land of promise will be, by encouraged assistance, promoted under the protectorate of England or some other world-power. In this connection it may be of interest to read Mt. 24. 32, 33 and parallels in regard to the parable of the fig tree, which parable, many hold, refers to the Jewish people in their coming back and again becoming a nation in their old home. Compare the possible and probably correct translation of Dan. 12. 7: "And when he shall have ceased to scatter a part of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled." This translation would prove that a partial return of the Jews is a sign of the entrance into the last period before the Second Advent. Read also Lk. 21. 28, 31, the first of these verses stating that the beginning of the enumerated signs is a token of the nearness of the redemption and the second verse asserting that when these things happen, the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. According to the historical-prophetic school of interpretation the dissolution of the Turkish empire is a proximate sign. This school holds that the drying up of the river Euphrates is a figurative expression for the downfall of the Turkish power. Compare Rev. 16. 12, 15. The approach of the end of the times of the Gentiles is also a proximate sign of the Second Advent period. A sign of such an approach is the fact that we have reached the middle of the feet of the dream-image of Nebuchadnezzar and reached, therefore, the attempt to form world-leagues or a world alliance of difficult combinations. If the world-league is successful for a time, it must, nevertheless, lead to the ten kingdoms which will finally be united into the revived Roman empire under the rule of the world-emperor who is Rev. 13 is called the wild beast or beast from the sea. According to Daniel we must place among the proximate signs the preparations for the coming of such a beast. These proximate signs will be very clear, when the beast, firstly, appears as the little horn and then, secondly, attains such power as to enter into the seven-year covenant with the Jews. Compare Dan. 9. 27. When such a covenant is adopted, the end of the times of the Gentiles is approaching. According to the historical-prophetical school The Times of the Gentiles continue 2520 years (Lev. 26: seven times—7x360), counted from the Babylonian captivity dates.—It has always been held that Mt. 24. 14 points to a sure sign of the Second Advent. In quoting the verse we must carefully notice the words "a testimony unto all the nations." The verse does not say that every human being will hear the Gospel before the return of Christ. It is not stated that every nation would become Christian before the Advent. Be very careful to note that the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony: "And then shall the end come." By comparing Col. 1. 23 it is evident that the words "preached in all creation under heaven" throw light on the meaning of world-preaching. When Paul used such an allowable grammatical hyperbole as to the extent of Gospel preaching in his day, what would he say in regard to the spread of the Gospel in our day! The Christian nations have not done their duty, that is true, but the question here is only an exegetical one if the meaning of Mt. 24. 14 precludes the nearness of the Advent of Christ. Considering the parallels, it is plain that the meaning is relative. And we must take account of other signs. When these accumulate and culminate, the world testimony by preaching makes this sign so much stronger. As far as Mt. 24. 14 is concerned in our day, there is no reason to believe that the Advent of Christ is distant, but rather that the Second Advent period may be nearer than commonly held. Other proximate signs will be the attempt to rebuild the Jewish temple and again institute the old Levitical ritual. Later at the very Second Advent period there will be a number of other proximate signs, such as the rise of the little horn from the political sea as the first beast or political Antichrist, then the rise of the second beast or the false prophet, the setting up of the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation and other signs of an extraordinary nature, preceding the fall of Babylon, the battle at Armageddon and Jerusalem, the judgment of the beasts and other events at the epiphany of Christ. But the latest events cease to be signs and belong to the acts of Christ at His Apocalypse. In other sections of this book the leading proximate signs will be explained more in detail.—"Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Th. 5. 4.

III. HISTORICAL BEACON LIGHTS AND MARKS ON THE CHART OF PROPHECY

SECTION FOUR

BEACON LIGHTS AND PROPHETICAL MARKS IN DANIEL AND ZECHARIAH

1. *THE FIRST BEACON LIGHT*

and Prophetical Marks in Daniel 2. 31–43.

Daniel states that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was a prophecy. When we consider, how this dream was fulfilled in history, the content of the different parts becomes marks on the chart of prophecy. The people of God may be looked upon as being on a voyage on the great river of earthly life, advancing toward the great goal of the glorious kingdom of heaven. Every time of fulfilment is like a beacon light or like a mark on a chart showing the distance passed. The four kingdoms in our section of Daniel prove where we are. The second chapter of Daniel is indeed an almanach of prophetical history. The chapter with additions in later chapters becomes an outline of world history and of the destiny of the leading earthly kingdoms from Nebuchadnezzar to the consummation.

The first kingdom in this dream vision was Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar as the first great king was the head of gold. And he was in truth a great emperor. Excavations in our day attest the greatness and grandeur of his rule. Explorers tell us that Babylonia in its ruins spreading over two hundred square miles, witnesses to the mighty king's greatness. Most of the bricks found are stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar. He was not only one of the greatest generals and conquerors, but also a great ruler and a builder of note. The great city of Babylon, as attested by history and excavations, was a wonderful testimony to the ability of the king as an architect. The old Babylon occupied one side of the river, but the great king extended it to the other side and spanned the river with splendid bridges. The vast city was four-square, 56 miles in circumference, and the walls 350 feet high and 87 feet broad at the top, giving room for six chariots to race abreast. In the walls were 25 brass gates and between every two gates an imposing watch tower. From each gate to the one opposite there was a broad and magnificent avenue. There were 50 main streets 15 miles in length. Around the houses were gardens and on the roofs bridges for promenades. One of the royal palaces was seven and a half miles in circumference, and there were hanging gardens. The city was indeed magnificent. The old Babylon is no more. There are different opinions whether Babylon will be rebuilt or not. The reason for the varied opinions depends upon, if the Babylon in the book of Revelation implies a rebuilt Babylon on the site of the old. But on account of the prophecies concerning the old Babylon and for other evident reasons, we are safe in holding that another world city is meant, which is called Babylon for good reasons. But one thing is clear, that the Babylonian empire had ceased to exist 538 B.C.

The next mark on the chart of prophetical history is the coming and passing of the Medo-Persian kingdom. These two nations are represented in the image by the shoulders and two arms, and the neck expressing the unity in Cyrus. If we read the history of Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius Hystaspes and Xerxes, the greatness of this kingdom is very apparent. It was not as great as the Babylonian under Nebuchadnezzar. But it is designated by silver and continued longer, or about 200 years, while the kingdom of Babylon lasted only about 70 years.

The beacon lights are passed quickly during the Times of the Gentiles. In the year 330 the Persian empire was superseded by the Graeco-Macedonian kingdom. The notable man in this kingdom was Alexander the Great. It is not necessary to describe his great victories. In the image his kingdom corresponds to the abdomen and thighs and is likened to brass. It is remarkable that in history the Persian and Graeco-Macedonian empires are looked upon as the most brilliant epochs. Think of the many heroes, poets, artists, orators, and statesmen who lived in that period! It was the classic period of culture and a productive epoch. But God looks upon that time as brass, and Paul standing on Mars' Hill calls it the time of ignorance.

Then follows the Roman period which succeeded the Grecian in the year 63 B.C. In the image we find this period designated in the first place by iron and in the latter days by a mixture of iron and clay. The legs, feet, and toes are figures of the historical development of this fourth world-empire. The Roman empire had two main divisions, the Eastern and the Western, designated by the legs. If this Roman empire does not distinctly appear up to the latter days as the two legs and feet, we must bear in mind that according to hermeneutical laws of interpretation figurative language does not cover every phase except in leading outlines. If in one sense the Roman empire ceased A.D. 476, the legs may be traced both in the East and the West. The states formerly constituting the iron empire are still existing and the old traits of iron characteristics are apparent, if we study the outlines of history from the fifth century in Europe and the near East. In such a study we can see the iron legs extending up to our time. Under the codes of the iron empire the nations are still living and will continue to live to the approach of the time when the so-called stone kingdom will be set up. There will not be another empire like the old Roman iron power,, because the ten-kingdom confederacy corresponds to the toes of the image and will result finally in an attempt to revive the old iron power, when the political Antichrist supported by the false Prophet will be elected Roman emperor by the confederacy and in fact will become a world emperor. Then, historically, it will be clear what is meant in Rev. 17. 7–17, and notice the beast "that was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss."

When we study the figurative meaning of the feet and toes of the image, and note that they are composed partly of potters' clay and partly of iron, we find that the iron kingdom in its latter state has become weak, because the component parts cannot cleave one to another, even as iron does not mingle with miry clay. It is self-evident to even superficial observers that our time clearly depicts such a state of the former strong iron kingdom or Roman empire. The iron kingdom is divided in many kingdoms and states. There is not much left of the former great empires. There are kingdoms and democratic govenments. The kingdoms and republics which formerly constituted the Roman empire are endeavoring to perpetuate themselves by all kinds of compromises and coalitions, but there is no permanency and a great fear is felt that the governments now representing the old iron power stand upon the margin of the most serious and momentous events in human history. Add to this condition in the old provinces of the Roman empire the upheaval of the power of Germany and the old empire of Russia. And do not forget the disturbances in the Mohammedan world, in China and other parts of the world! The League of Nations as an outcome of the great world-war prepares the way for the so-called ten kingdoms which will be the revival of the Roman empire. There is a talk of forming a United States of Europe and Near Asia. Another confederacy may sooner or later loom up and be formed on account of Russia, the Gog in the prophecies of Ezekiel. But we cannot fail to notice that in the many divisions of the old Roman world power formations take place which make the outlines of the ten kingdoms more and more plain. Alsace and Lorraine have been restored to France, and Ireland has acquired more political freedom from England, the disruption of the empire of Austria and subsequent divisions with new coalitions, the deposition of the Sultan and the recent republic of the Turkish power, and the new conditions in Palestine and Egypt, all these things are signs of impending changes of momentous importance. When we consider the power of Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Modernism in religion and the Antichristian movements, we find that the composition of society is not stable. While on account of the influence of the Christian religion there is also the iron of a Christian character in the social fabric, the ultra mixed conditions prove beyond a doubt that we approach the situation depicted in Daniel, when he describes the meaning of the feet and especially of the toes of the great image, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream-vision. Daniel informs us that the ten toes are ten kings. God only knows when these ten kings will arise. But they with their kingdoms will be the last form of the divided Roman dominion before the unification by the so-called little horn. The little horn is not mentioned in the second chapter. According to this chapter the fourth kingdom in its divided state is the last world power. Later chapters and the book of Revelation reveal more details. When the eleventh, also called the little horn as to its beginning, appears as the emperor of the revived Roman empire, the ten kings have such power through him that the statement is true that in the days of those kings God shall set up His kingdom. The emperor is not referred to in this chapter, because when the figurative stone strikes the toes and the whole image, the power of the so-called eleventh horn is also broken. We will refer to the stone kingdom in another connection.

2. *THE SECOND BEACON LIGHT*

and Prophetical Marks in Daniel 7. 2–27.

This beacon light is very strong and throws its beams beyond the last forms of human rule. The same kingdoms are mentioned as in the second chapter, but from a somewhat different angle.

The vision related in the seventh chapter is a dream vision. He saw a great sea, probably in the dream the Mediterranean sea, and the sea was in a stormy upheaval, and he may have seen as far as the Atlantic ocean, for the fourth beast arising from the sea depicts the Roman empire which stretched beyond the Mediterranean. The four beasts that came up from the sea are the same kingdoms as in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian power is represented under the symbol of a lion, the king of beasts, and its swoop is like the eagle's, the kingly bird. The debasement of Nebuchadnezzar is referred to in the words that the wings were plucked, and his restoration is described in the expression: "Made to stand upon two feet as a man; and a man's heart was given to it." The second beast represents Medo-Persia which first rose to superior power on the Persian side, and the three ribs in its mouth are the kingdoms which it overpowered: Babylon, Lydia and Egypt. The third beast or leopard signifies the Grecian empire. The four wings represent the swiftness of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The four heads represent the four generals who became his successors, namely Lysimachus in Thrace and Bithynia, Seleucus in Syria and farther East, Ptolemy Soter in Egypt and Cassander in Macedonia and Greece. The fourth beast is the Roman empire. It is described as terrible. When it is stated that it devoured and brake in pieces etc., we have a real description of what history has recorded concerning this power. In regard to the ten horns which it had, it cannot be proved that it had either contemporaneously or successively ten divisions in the past. And the eleventh horn comes up after the ten. The historical school of prophecy says that either papacy or Islam must be the eleventh horn, but their time is past and they still exist, although this school of prophecy claims that either of these two would continue 1260 years whatever calendar is followed. If we compare chapter two in regard to the ten toes and Rev. 17. 12, we find that these ten horns exist at the same time. The horn that comes up after them is called a little horn as to its insignificant beginning. But this little horn overcame three of the ten, and by this lucky stroke his power grew, and finally the seven remaining were won over to his cause. The history of this horn or king is continued in chapters 8, 9 and 11. The rulership of ten was evidently restored, if we compare Rev. 17: 12, 13, but the eleventh horn became the president of the confederation. It is stated in Daniel how this horn or king spake great things, against the Most High and the saints, how he warred against the saints and prevailed against them. And he shall have this greatest power during a time, times and half a time. By comparing other passages in the Bible this description of time means three and a half years. There are different opinions as to the meaning of the saints. Some claim that they are Israel or the Jews. Daniel does not enter into details as to the meaning. Possibly he thought of his own nationality. In fulfilment the saints of Israel or the Jews are not excluded, but if we compare the statements in the New Testament, all the saints of the co-called Gentile Christians are included. When the eleventh horn or the Antichrist appears, most of the Jews are still Jews in their religion. In Palestine there will be more Jews than Christians and many of the Christians living there may not be saints or true Christians. There will be true Jewish Christians and true Gentile Christians who will be the saints. At first the coming Antichrist is friendly and according to chapter 9. 27 makes a covenant for the benefit of the Jewish people in Palestine which covenant he breaks in the middle of the year-week. Then he shows his real character. The inhabitants in Palestine will then experience an unequalled tribulation, which is called the great tribulation, and the climax of suffering will affect more or less the whole world.

At the close of the three and a half years the Most High interferes and the great scenes described in 7. 9–14 are enacted. Daniel sees a celestial scene and its ultimate consequences on earth. God "the Ancient of Days" is seen to take His throne in the sky, displacing "the Prince of this world" and "the horn" or the Antichrist. The antichristian Beast is slain and he is seen being thrown into fire. Daniel also sees "the Son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven and He is brought near the Ancient of Days and receives the everlasting kingdom.

In comparing Daniel 2. 44, 45 in regard to the stone which demolished the kingdoms of this world, we notice that chapter 7 gives more details in depicting the ultimate issue. The second chapter does not state that the ten kings were later under the dominion of a great world emperor. While the seventh chapter gives more details, the dream vision of Nebuchadnezzar presents a scene of tremendous consummation, when we see the stone crushing the whole image of worldly power. With the obliteration of the image, we see the stone becoming a great mountain covering the whole world. The figures are different, but the final ultimate is the same.

Some interpreters have held the view that the so-called stone kingdom is only spiritual, and they identify it with the Kingdom of Grace or the Church, which was organized at the first advent of Christ. It is true that the Kingdom of Grace began as the Church in the Roman empire, but we must also consider that the stone struck the feet which belong to "the latter days." And the description of those days refers to the judgment period, when the Kingdom of God supersedes all human dominion. The kingdom has a superhuman origin. In the figurative language used, the stone, cut out of a mountain, smote the image and therefore broke to pieces also the last empire of Antichrist. The mountain refers to the almighty power of God. This glorious Kingdom appears without human agency. God interferes directly in the period of judgment. The so-called stone kingdom could not be the Christian Church which never has sought to destroy human governments. Christ as a "rock" never rebelled against the Roman empire. At the time of Christ "the ten toes" had not appeared in fulfilment of the dream-vision. Except the Church of Rome no part of the Church has attempted to be a kingdom of this world. The figurative stone kingdom or the Kingdom of glory is connected with the second Advent of Christ. This is very clear from the seventh chapter, verses 9–14, 22, 27, where the judgment is described, when the power of Antichrist is crushed. There we read of the Ancient of days and His glorious appearance, how judgment is held and the books were opened with the coming of the Son of man, to whom dominion is given which is an everlasting kingdom. This vision does not describe the spiritual kingship of Christ during the Church period, but evidently is fulfilled in the judgment period or at the Second Advent.

3. *THE THIRD BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks in Daniel 8. 19–26.

In the beginning of the chapter the vision of the ram and he-goat is related. The ram is plainly the same as the bear-kingdom. The ram has two horns and the one that was higher than the other came up last. This refers to Media and Persia, and how Persia became the real power. The conquest in three directions corresponds with the three ribs in the bear's mouth. The vision of the he-goat has more details, but is the same kingdom as the leopard or the Graeco-Macedonian empire. The great horn in verse 21 is Alexander the Great. The four kingdoms are the same as in chapter 7. 6, which arose by the fourfold division of the empire after the death of Alexander. In verse 9 it is stated that out of one of the four a little horn will come forth, and in verse 23 we are informed that in the latter time of the four kingdoms a king of fierce countenance shall come forth. If the first reading gives the impression that the little horn or the king with fierce countenance is Antiochus Epiphanes and that therefore the prophecy is fulfilled, a closer study reveals that Antiochus Epiphanes is really only a type, for the following reasons prove that the fulfilment is yet in the future: History does not record any conquest on the part of Antiochus Epiphanes "towards the East," Antiochus lived in the former time of the four kingdoms and not in their latter time, which has not come even in our day, although we live nearer the end than he did; the last end of indignation did not come with Antiochus, which is clear by studying parallel passages concerning the eleventh horn; the Jews although suffering greatly under Antiochus gained under the Maccabees the greatest independence that they ever had since the fall of the kingdom in 587 B.C. When Gabriel was commanded to interpret the vision, Daniel was informed that the vision belonged to the time of the end. Compare 8. 17 and 19. In the 19th verse we read of the latter time of the indignation and about the time of the end. In the 23rd verse it is stated in referring to the four kingdoms that in the latter time of these four kingdoms, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance shall appear. The description does not fully correspond with the portraiture of Antiochus. It also seems to be evident that the four kingdoms will be very prominent in the last times, when the time of the eleventh horn or the beast of Rev. 13. 1–9 approaches. The time of Antiochus Epiphanes belongs to the earlier time of the four kingdoms. He did not even live in the latter time of the Grecian empire. Antiochus never became an emperor, as the king of fierce countenance will be. Antiochus was a cruel king and persecuted the Jews, and his whole career has many traits which at least typically portray the eleventh horn or the Antichrist of the last times, but there are descriptions in regard to the king of fierce countenance which do not fully correspond to the historical and prophetic delineation of Antiochus Epiphanes. If the vision of the evening and morning could be applied to the time of Antiochus, it would simplify the interpretation of this prophecy, but the interpretation by the angel Gabriel gives the impression that even the evening and morning vision belongs to the future. Concerning the vision the angel states that it belongs to the time of the end (verse 17). And verse 26 relates that the angel said the following: "And the vision of the evenings and mornings which hath been told is true; but shut thou up the vision; for it belongeth to many days to come." This evidently proves that it is impossible to limit this vision to the time of Antiochus, but it is also possible to find typical events during the cruel rule of Antiochus which are so striking that they seem to be the actual fulfilment. The following similarities may be mentioned; He came up out of one of the four kingdoms, he arose from a small beginning, he persecuted the Jews, profaned the temple, he tried to establish the worship of Jupiter Olympus, he set the image of his idol on the altar in the temple and offered swine's flesh in sacrifice. The time which the angel gave as marking the treading down of the sanctuary also seems to correspond to "the vision of the evening and the morning." If we take the 2,300 evenings and mornings to mean so many days we have the length of the time from the first denudation of the sanctuary until the restoration by the Maccabean heroes. But he did not place the abomination of desolation on the altar of the Lord, because Christ refers to this as future, which proves that the placing of Jupiter on the altar by Antiochus was only typical.

A careful study of the vision strengthens the view that Antiochus is a type and that the vision of the evening and morning is also typical. Concerning the four kingdoms the text gives the impression that they will exist in the latter days. We again refer to 8. 19 and 26. If we consider conditions at present, the four kingdoms in one form or another are evident. Greece and Egypt have always been plainly visible on the chart of prophecy and as geographical facts. In our day Greece and Egypt are kingdoms or governments that are constantly heard from. Turkey occupies at present the third kingdom and also in the main the fourth. But a rearrangement by revolutions may occur by which Turkey may be divided and the four kingdoms will be plainly marked. We should remember how unexpectedly and suddenly the last Turkish sultan was dethroned. The conditions in the Near East may at any time cause changes of far-reaching importance. From one of the four kingdoms the antitype should come just as the type. It cannot be from the Far East or from Egypt according to the description of the conquest. He could arise from the Near East and conquer the Far East. In that case he would arise either from Asia Minor or Syria. If he comes from Greece, he could conquer the Near East, Palestine and Egypt. Compare 8. 9. The expression "toward the pleasant land" might favor Greece. It seems therefore that he will arise either from Greece or the Near East. This would then also show that the little horn, or the eleventh horn, would rise in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Some exegetes hold that the little horn in chapter 8 is different from the one in chapter 7. In such a case it must be the second beast in the book of Revelation. One author holds that the little horn in chapter 8 is the king of the north whom he calls the Assyrian (Is. 10. 5–34). If the name Assyrian is used symbolically for an enemy of Israel and Judah in the last days, it does not prove he is the little horn in Dan. 8 and different from the little horn in chapter 7. The same author holds that the wilful king is the Antichrist. Compare Dan. 11. 36–39. He claims that he is the second beast in Rev. 13. 11–17. By such an interpretation there would be three beasts or Antichrists in Daniel, the political in chapter 7, the king of the north in chapter 8 and the religious in chapter 11. In a general sense there are many antichrists. Revelation is progressive and therefore also progressive in prophecy. In the book of Revelation, which is the climax in prophecy, there are only two Antichrists and Paul mentions only one. According to progressive prophecy there would hardly be a revelation of three in Daniel and only two in Revelation 13. If there are different characteristics in the three narratives of Daniel, the additional accounts only complete the sketching and the picture of the one horn that becomes the beast. We therefore hold the view that the horn in the last part of chapter 8 is the same as in chapter 7 and again in chapter 11. In Ezek. 38–39 we read of Gog who also is an enemy of the Jews, besides being an enemy of the great Antichrist or the beast in Rev. 13. 1–9. We will describe the enemy Gog in another connection. When

Daniel speaks of only one horn, the coming beast, it seems to be plainly evident that the horn that he describes rises in the eastern part of the former Roman empire and from one of the four kingdoms that formerly belonged to the Graeco-Macedonian empire. Concerning this beast it is stated that he shall stand up against the Prince of princes, or the Lord. The horn or later beast will at first be friendly to the Jews and make a covenant with those who have returned to Palestine. By this covenant the Jews will be allowed to begin their sacrifices on the old temple site and begin rebuilding their temple. But later the beast will break his covenant and become the greatest enemy the Jews ever had. Then begins the great tribulation. Concerning the covenant and the breaking of it read chapter 9. 27. This throws light on chapter 8. 13, 14. When a holy one asked a question in regard to the length of the vision concerning the continual burnt offering and the transgression that maketh desolate to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot, another holy one, the one questioned, answered: "Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." This is a period of six years, four months and twenty days, covering the time from the beginning of the burnt offering and the abomination of desolation by Antichrist until the cleansing of the sanctuary. The beginning of the sacrifices must follow the covenant mentioned in chapter 9. 27 and the cleansing cannot take place before the Antichrist and the false Prophet have been overcome and judged.*

4. *THE FOURTH BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks in Daniel 9. 24–27.

The Seventy weeks are a bright beacon light on the way to final prophetical fulfilment, and the prophetical marks are plain. The people of God living from the beginning of the seventy year weeks could know how many years would elapse before the time of Messiah on earth, and those who lived during the first mark of 49 years and the second mark of 434 years could study the prophecy and know when the anointed one or Christ would be cut off and the consequences of this. They could find out by counting according to the direction of Gabriel how near that time they lived. Only approximately was it possible to calculate the time of the birth of Christ. The saints who lived in the generation approaching the end of the 483 (49+434) years might be able to hope that the birth of Christ was near or had taken place. Simeon and Anna were among those who searched the Scriptures and were favored by God to know the fulfilment. The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he should not see death, before he had seen Christ. This promise was fulfilled when Simeon came into the temple when the child Jesus was brought in, and he held the Christ-child in his arms. Read the narrative in Luke 2. 25–38, which cannot be read too often! According to verse 38 there were others who waited for redemption.

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* The Historical school claims that days means years, wherefore 2,300 days mean so many years. This school counts from the seventh year of Artaxerxes, 457 B.C. The period covers the restoration of the sacrifices, the destruction of the temple, year 70 A.D., the following desolation, the conquest of Jerusalem by the Saracens 637, the building of the Mosque of Omar on the temple area and the rule of the Turks. The 2,300 years ended 1843–4, counting from 457 B.C., and 1856 A.D., counting from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. During this decennary the Turkish power began to decrease. If the 75 years in Daniel 12 are added, we come to 1918–19, when the Turks entirely lost Palestine. Jerusalem was captured by the English in December 1917. The Historical school looks upon these dates as the beginning of the cleansing of the sanctuary site to prepare the way for the restoration.

As we know from prophecies and promises that Christ will come again, although the O. T. saints did not understand that there would be two Advents, we should consider that we have not a prophecy of the exact time of the second Advent. But we may from fulfilled prophecies calculate the period in which we live. The prophecies in Daniel such as those in chapter two are very helpful. By comparing other prophecies we may learn from the signs of the times that the second Advent period cannot be so far distant as some hold. All signs rather seem to prove that our period is next to the Advent era, but God has not revealed the length of the period. But if the Christians of a former period were waiting, we have so much more reason to be watchful, because very few prophecies remain to be fulfilled before the judgment period. To understand this more fully we must study the meaning of the Seventy weeks and how far they were fulfilled in the First Advent period. This also makes it necessary to go back to the year 538 B.C. when Daniel studied the prophecies in regard to the end of the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people. He studied especially Jer. 25. 11, 12 and 29. 10. He was convinced that the time for delivery had come. Cyrus had conquered Babylon, but during the completion of his conquest the Median Darius was co-regent with Cyrus. Cyrus was the real king and appointed Darius as ruler. According to the Hebrew, Darius "was caused to be king," in Hebrew the anglicized "homlak" is the causative passive. His name does not occur in ordinary history as Darius but he is called Cyaxares II and some claim that he was Gobryas. Cyaxares II was uncle to Cyrus, being his mother's brother, and according to Xenophon he was also father-in-law to Cyrus. This would explain why he was the ruler during the absence of Cyrus. The Babylonian exile is counted from 606 B.C. and ended therefore 536 B.C., when Cyrus began his sole rule. There is a prophecy in regard to him in Is. 44. 28 and 45. 1. The prophecy was fulfilled when Cyrus liberated the Jews. It was for this deliverance Daniel was praying, and for the future destiny of his people. Daniel felt that the captives had not the repentant mind which was requisite according to Jeremiah. But God remembered His promise and heard the prayer of Daniel. In this connection read 2 Chr. 36. 22, 23 and Ezr. 1. The prayer of Daniel should be carefully read and considered. In this case the answer was received at once. While Daniel was praying, Gabriel appeared, being caused to fly swiftly. This happened about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. When we read the answer, it is plain that God kept His promise, but we also notice that more chastening would follow before the final redemption in the last days.

Seventy year-weeks are set aside from the near and future time to delineate important events in the history of Israel and of the greatest concern to the whole world. These year-weeks amount to 490 years which are divided into three parts. The first division is 49 years, the second 434 years and the third 7 years. If we carefully consider what is to be accomplished in these 490 years according to verses 24 and 27, it is evident that there is a break in the consecutive run of the years and that this break begins when the 483 years have run their course, because vision and prophecy were not sealed up then, and the events related in verse 27 did not take place during the years following the 483. The first 49 years relate to the time of Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, covering also the completion of the O. T. canon. The following period of 434 years brings us to the most momentous events in the life of the Messiah. The beginning of these years should be settled. It can be done by counting backwards, if we know the year of Christ's baptism, as we then come on the solar scale to the year 458–457 B.C. and on the lunar scale to the year 444–443 B.C. Christ's baptism seems to have taken place 26 A.D. But by following the text in Dan. 9. 25 we find that the issuing of a decree to restore and build Jerusalem is the time to count from (terminus a quo). There were two decrees by Artaxerxes Longimanus, the first 458–457 and the second 444–443 B.C. If we add 483 years (solar years) to 457, we reach 26 A.D., and if we add according to the lunar scale to 443, we come to the same year, 26 A.D. The lunar years, transferred to solar, number 469–8. If it is claimed that the decree must be the one given to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (444–443), it is perfectly legitimate to use the lunar scale which was followed in Persia, as then we come to the year of Christ's baptism. It has been contended that the decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, 547 B.C. cannot be counted from as a terminus a quo, because there is no plain mention of the city in the later decree issued to Nehemiah. Although the decree of Cyrus is not referred to, the same criticism can be alleged to it, as it speaks exclusively of the temple (Ezra 1). Yet compare Is. 45. 13, where God says of Cyrus, long before he was born: "He shall build my City." But both the decree in Ezr. 7 and Neh. 2 point to the Anointed, the first on the solar and the second on the lunar scale. It is fully suitable that Christ's baptism is the main goal and that He then was attested as the Anointed one. At the baptism by John the public career of Christ and His spiritual kingship really began. The title, prince, in verse 25 after the words, "the anointed one," favors partly the idea that Christ's entrance into Jerusalem is the goal of the prophecy, but the time calculation reaches more literally the baptism of Christ. There cannot be any serious objection to this view of Christ's entrance on Palm Sunday as a king (Zechariah 9. 9) because it is only a difference of three years and may be considered as another phase of His kingship, just as His confession before Pilate that He was a king in another sense than the Jews expected. It does not prevent us from holding the view that His kingship in the spiritual sense began when He was baptized.

The death of Christ is clearly foretold in the beginning of the 26th verse, where it is clearly stated: "After the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." The following words in the same verse refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A.D. In connection with the people that shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, another prince (not the prince in verse 25 or the beginning of verse 26) is mentioned, who will be the little horn (Antichrist) of the last days. "The people of the prince that shall come" proves that this prince is a Roman prince. It could not therefore be the prince who is called the Anointed one, because He was not a Roman. And it could not be Titus, because we read, "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Titus was the general of the people and he did all he could do to prevent the destruction of the temple. The meaning is therefore that "the prince that shall come" would be a Roman. Even if he springs from the former Eastern Roman Empire, he is still a Roman. We remember from the preceding that the little horn would probably come from one of the provinces of the former Greek empire, which became the Eastern Roman Empire. This coming prince will according to the 27th verse make a covenant for seven years. Titus did not make such a covenant. This covenant with the Jewish people belongs to the future. When we consider that the destruction of Jerusalem took place 70 A.D. and according to the 26th verse "even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined," it is clear that the 483 years are not consecutively connected with the seven remaining of the 490 years. The seven remaining years are still in the future. The prophecy of coming wars has been fulfilled many times. Jerusalem has seen about twenty sieges so far. The Jerusalem of old lies buried about from twenty to eighty feet under the ruins and rubbish of centuries. Jeremiah prophesied: "The city shall be builded upon her own heap." This has been fulfilled. It may seem peculiar that there is a break before the last seven years have run their course. The main reason for the interval before the seven remaining years lies in the fact that the 490 years refer principally to the Jewish nation. By their treatment of Christ the Jews sealed the doom of their nation, and their national history as a kingdom was interrupted by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with the consequent dispersion in the Roman captivity. Breaks of many years are mentioned in the synoptics. We will refer to Lk. 21. 24, where we read: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The first part refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews in the Roman captivity. The dispersion continues in our day, although many Jews have returned and settled in Palestine. The times of the Gentiles have not been finished, as the Gentiles still rule Palestine. As we know the English have a mandate given by the League of Nations as an outcome of the last world war. The Gentile rule will be the worst under the rule of the so-called little horn or the political Antichrist. In this connection read Rom. 11. 25 about the fulness of the Gentiles: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Only the Lord knows when the fulness of the Gentiles will be complete, then Israel will come to its rights; "For God is able to graft them in again." Many signs prove that the fulness of the Gentiles is not very far distant and that the long break after the 483 years may end sooner than expected. The time has not been revealed, but when the covenant according to Dan. 9. 27 is made, then the remaining seven years of the 490 will run their course. It is not necessary that a very large immigration of Jews into Palestine shall have taken place and that a Jewish state shall have been organized. The time of the beginning of the seven years is at hand when a little horn has acquired sufficient power and influence to make a covenant with many prominent Jews and Gentiles to allow the Jews to begin the building of the temple and immediately to erect an altar for sacrifices on the old site. It is interesting to compare Is. 28. 18 and context in regard to the covenant of death and hell. When many prominent Jews have entered into a covenant with the little horn, they will not understand that the covenant will lead to death and hell. The little horn in his contract will promise a Jewish state in Palestine and the rebuilding of the temple, but he will break the covenant. The statement in Dan. 9. 27 is as follows: "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abomination shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate." The prince who makes the covenant rises from the Roman empire, and he is friendly to the Jews for political reasons during the first half of the seven years. Then he becomes the Beast and breaks the covenant after three and a half years. He forbids the offerings in the temple. He is coming as a desolator and by translating literally we read: "and upon a wing of abominations the desolator." The desolator will be carried on a wing of abominations. The wickedness of a false religion, the harlot church and the power of the ten kings will be a wing carrying the prince to the imperial throne of a restored Roman empire.

The abomination of desolation will also according to Rev. 13 have a realistic symbolization in the image of the desolator standing on holy ground. Then begins the great tribulation and the last for the Jewish people living in Palestine, but the whole world will suffer from it more or less just as under the late world war. This the greatest tribulation will continue during three and a half years and therefore until the consummation, when the Lord punishes the beasts. Compare Rev. 19.

5. *THE FIFTH BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks in Daniel 11. 36—12. 13.

The introduction to Daniel's last great vision begins in the 10th ch., and the vision in its climax becomes the 5th beacon light illumining the marks on the prophetical chart. There are three main marks on the prophetical chart in the section of chapters 10–12. The first part, 10. 4—11. 1, is an introduction; the second part, 11. 2–35, is a historical background, and the third part, 11. 36—12. 1–13, is a vision of the last days. We will not discuss the interesting events in chapter 10. It may suffice to say that there is a Christophany or Theophany of the second person in the Godhead described in 10. 4–9. Compare Rev. 1. 12–17. Thereafter an angel, probably Gabriel, appears and relates how the prayer was heard immediately, but he was hindered from delivering the message for three weeks by the evil prince-spirit ruling over Persia. The prince was not Cyrus, but an evil spirit trying invisibly to influence Cyrus against the Jews. Finally the angel, or Gabriel, received help from Michael and overcame the evil spirit.

The angel then foretells in detail what we call the historical background of the main vision. In 11. 21 begins the history of Antiochus Ephiphanes, who is a type of the "little horn" or the future political Antichrist, whose description begins in the 36th verse. Possibly there may be typical events in the historical narration in verses 21–35. With verse 36 begins the prophecy of the last days. The wilful king is the same as the "little horn," but the new designation is based on the statement in the beginning of the 36th verse: "And the king shall do according to his will."

When we read carefully the description of this king, we find that he cannot be the second beast in Rev. 13. If this king is the same as the second beast, the descriptions in 11. 36–45 and Rev. 13. 11–17 do not tally or correspond. The account in Dan. 7, 8 and 11 corresponds and talllies with Rev. 13. 1–7. Even if the descriptions vary in some parts, they complete one another and characterize the political Antichrist from different angles. Daniel only speaks of one "beast," the eleventh or little horn. John speaks of antichrists and also of the Antichrist in his first epistle, but not before relating his visions in the book of Revelation does he present two antichrists, but the first in chapter 13 is the principal and the second supports him. The book of Revelation is the climax in prophecy as to the last times. The leading Antichrists are therefore two and could not be three. Every Bible reader should compare the accounts in Dan. 7. 25; 8. 9–12, 23–25. Dan. 11. 36–39 only adds to the description. In all the accounts are similar descriptions. In the first it is stated that he shall speak great words against the Most High, in the second that he shall stand up against the Prince and princes, and in the third that he shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods. Some argue that the king mentioned in the 11th chapter does not reverence the God of his fathers, and that he consequently must be a Jew. But this is not a conclusive proof. He can be an infidel if he should happen to be a Roman or Greek. He may either be the one or the other. It has not been revealed, and therefore speculations lead to no result. Nationality is not the most important. Neither can we base any conclusions as to religion on the words "nor the desire of woman," and say that this expression points to the Roman Catholic doctrine of celibacy. It simply means that the coming little horn or beast has no tender affections as the love of woman. He has no regard for human love and family ties, just as he does not care for religion and gods. If he should worship anything, it would be warfare and all it implies in order to become and remain the world emperor in the old Roman sense. Such a god as warfare would be a foreign god and no personal god. It would be a god as taught in many philosophies and many sciences so-called. In our day many reject a personal God and personify the divine in man. The political Antichrist will do the same and be worshiped as the greatest embodiment of majesty and the emperor of the world. The fortieth verse is a problem in exegesis. If we should follow most translations, it would give the impression that the Antichrist of the last days would be attacked not only by the king of the South, but also by the king of the North, although the context calls him the king of the North, from which he as the king of the North comes to take possession of Palestine, Egypt and all the countries. Only Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon will be delivered out of his hand (verse 41). According to Is. 11. 14 these three will be conquered later by Israel and Judah when the last dispersion of the tribes ends. We can well understand that Antichrist could not stop to conquer all the tribes of the Mohammedan religion. Although at first sight it looks as if the king of the North was not identical with Antichrist, a closer scrutiny of the text and context compels us to hold that the king of the North and Antichrist are one and the same. Antiochus Epiphanes was the type of Antichrist, therefore he also as the antitype must be the king of the North. Read the whole chapter from verse 21 in regard to the type and consider that verses 36–45 refer principally to the antitype of the Antichrist of the last days. It is the Antichrist or king of the North who comes against the king of the South like a whirlwind, etc. Let us read verse 40 in this light: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt) contend with him (the king of the North or Antichrist coming from the north); and the king of the north (Antichrist) shall come against him (king of Egypt or south) like a whirlwind," etc. Then Antichrist continues his victorious march. On account of troublesome reports from the east and north Antichrist returns to Palestine. His plan to destroy many may include more than the Jews or such Jews as have especially offended him, but whatever was his purpose on account of the reports from other countries, he settles for the time being around Jerusalem between the seas, and places his tabernacle on the holy mountain. The 45th verse furnishes no particulars, but only states that he shall come to his end. Further information must be gathered from parallel passages as Joel 3, Zech. 14, Rev. 16 and 19. The gathering of his armies will take place at Armageddon on the plain of Esdraelon. The particulars will be discussed later in the study of the book of Revelation. The time described in verse 45 is earlier than the battle at Jerusalem, when Antichrist shall be punished and the nations be judged (Zech. 14. 1–3).

The context of Dan. 11. 44–45 found in chapter 12. 1 informs us that this takes place when Michael shall stand up for his people and the great tribulation shall begin. According to Rev. 12. 7–9 Michael and his angels shall at that time war with the dragon or Satan and his angels, and Satan and his demon army shall be cast down to earth. It is the time when Satan takes possession of the emperor of the ten-kingdom confederacy, who then becomes the real beast or political Antichrist (Rev. 13. 1–8). It is also the time of the resurrection of many, but Dan. 12. 2 does not enter into details in regard to the order of ressurrection as Paul in 1 Cor. 15. At the interview in verses 5–7 Daniel is only a listener. He beholds two other heavenly visitants besides the man clothed in linen, or the Lord. The two angels were seen one on each side of the Tigris and the Lord was in the air above the waters of the river. One of the angels asked the Lord how long it would be to the end of these wonders. The answer is time, times and a half, or three and a half years, the last years of the rule of Antichrist. The latter part of v. 7 has been translated in different ways, but the meaning refers to the time when a part of the Jews have returned to Palestine, and after Antichrist breaks his covenant, the great tribulation follows. In this connection study Is. 63 and the following chapters. In ch. 64 we hear the plaints of the remnant. This remnant will be helped by the Lord. Compare Zech. 13. 9. In Dan. 12. 11 we are informed that from the time when the abomination of desolation is set up shall be 1290 days. This abomination Christ refers to as we read in Mt. 24. 15. This abomination is the image set up by the false Prophet in the holy place in Jerusalem. It will be a sure sign to the wise who live at that time. The 1290 and 1335 days overlap the 1260 days or three and a half years by 30 and 45 days. What events they lead to cannot be determined. Verse 12 only states that he is blessed in a special way who lives to the completion of the 1335 days after the setting up of the abomination. In this connection compare 8. 13, 14. When Antichrist in the middle of the seven years causes the sacrifice to cease (9. 27) he thereby breaks the covenant. Even if the Jews have not during the first part of the seven years been able to rebuild the temple they had evidently an altar of sacrifice erected as soon as the covenant was consummated. Otherwise the prophecy could not state that Antichrist would interrupt the sacrificial service. In the time we live Mohammedan temple service in the mosque desecrates the former site of the Jewish temple. We may think that the Mohammedans will never give up their mosque to be replaced by a Jewish temple, but when the time of fulfilment draws near, events will move quickly. As soon as the covenant is ratified, the Jewish altar of burnt offering will be placed in its proper place and the sanctuary will begin to be built. It is not necessary that everything is completed when the covenant is broken and the desecration takes place by the abomination of desolation or the erection of the image of Antichrist by the order of the false Prophet. Compare Rev. 13. 14. According to Dan. 8. 13, 14 two thousand and three hundred days will elapse before the sanctuary is cleansed and restoration of service begins. The cleansing and restoration will therefore overlap the last three and a half years of the seven years by two years, ten months and twenty days. When we take into consideration what is written in Ezek. 38 and 39, also in Zech. 13 and Rev. 19, we can well understand that time is required to cleanse the sanctuary, not to mention its rebuilding. The 11th and 12th verses of Daniel, chapter 12, add 30 and 45 days to the three and a half years, or 75 days, but the division of these days into 30 and 45 days must mark events in the restoration, which have not been revealed. If we read Acts 3. 21, we find that the restoration-time is called *times* of restoration. This proves beyond a doubt and plainly that the Second Advent is not limited to an ordinary day, as Christ must be the Leader in the "times of restoration." The practical Redemption requires time just as the work of Salvation during the First Advent. Compare also the 19th verse and note the expression "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

6. *THE SIXTH BEACON LIGHT*

and Prophetical Marks in Zechariah, Chapters 1–6, or the Night Visions.

We place the sixth beacon light at the resumption of the rebuilding and restoration of the temple by the 50,000 Jews who returned from the exile in Babylon 536 B.C. The foundation stone was laid the year after. But the building was delayed about 16 years by the trouble with the Samaritans. During these years the religious fervor had cooled, and it required the united efforts of Haggai and Zechariah to arouse the interest of the nation to lay hold of the restoration. Darius Hystaspis renewed the decree of Cyrus. The resumption took place during the year 520–519 B.C. The temple was finished in the year 515 B.C. The night visions occurred in one night on the 24th of the eleventh month, or according to our reckoning, February 24th, in the second year of Darius 519, five months after the building of the temple had been resumed. The visions were a series of revelations, only short pauses intervening between the views, presenting a connected picture of the future of Israel. In the first vision the prophet Zechariah saw a man riding upon a red horse in a deep valley, and behind him were red, sorrel and white horses, each with a rider. The colors are symbolical. Compare Revelation sixth chapter. It is important to notice that the rider upon the first red horse is not the same as the angel of the Lord. The rider on the red horse stopped with his company, where the angel of the Lord was standing, or in front of Him, to report. If the man on the red horse had been the angel of the Lord and the rest of the riders or troop had come to report, these horsemen would not have stood behind him, but in front of him. There was also another angel who talked with the prophet, who may be called an interpreting angel. Such an angel appears in other visions in company with other angels. Note also that in visions persons are often introduced as speaking according to their dramatic character without having been mentioned before. The prophet inquires concerning the company of angels among the myrtle trees in the valley. The interpreting angel answered: "I will show thee what these are." But the answer was really transmitted from the angel of the Lord. The answer was: "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." This scene gives us a look behind the veil of earthly history and, like the angelic scenes in the book of Daniel, proves how the angels as agents participate in the execution of divine commands in the government of the world. The angelic report was correct. In the second year of Darius Hystaspis there prevailed universal peace. But the country of the Jews and Israel was as a waste land, and Jerusalem had no walls for protection. The angel of the Lord pleads with Jehovah saying: "O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" To this appeal the Lord answered the interpreting angel and through him to Zechariah. The angel of the Lord knew the answer, but it was transmitted direct to the interpreting angel. The prophet was told to inform the people: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem," etc. Read the following verses! The temple was restored and later the city by Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. But it is evident that this was only the beginning of the fulfilment of promise. The answer is an outlook down the whole vista of the future and contains germinant predictions. The night visions are also typical and stretch forward to a long future of events. The second night vision proves the same as the four horns, and the four smiths cannot mean powers existing at the time of the visions, but must refer to the same horns or powers which appear in Daniel. At the time of the visions peace prevailed, but later troubles began again as in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, who also became a type of the little horn in some phases of its activities. And if the Medo-Persian and the Graeco-Macedonian powers were friendly to a certain extent, the Jews were nevertheless in subjection, for the Romans held the Jews as subjects. In the year 70 A.D. the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burnt and the Roman exile of the Jews began, which exile continues today. Then add to it the Mohammedan and Turkish rule in Palestine. The present peace and the Zionistic movement in the interest of the colonization of Jews in Palestine have not ended the Times of the Gentiles. Palestine has not been restored to the Jewish nation. But it was a good sign for the Jews, when the Turks lost their power in Palestine. The Eastern question is not solved, and the great tribulation belongs to the future. There are conversions among the Jews to Christianity, but the proportion in relation to the great mass of Jews is so small that we cannot expect that the Zionistic movement will change the religious attitude of the Jews.

Most of the rich Jews are rationalists and blinder religiously than ever before. But in due time God will interfere and the prophecy of Joel 3. 1, 2 will be fulfilled.

The third night vision about the measuring of Jerusalem was only partially fulfilled during the time of Nehemiah. The prophecy is typical and germinant. The last verses of chapter 2 prove this plainly. The fourth vision is mainly typical. The prophet saw Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, not in his costly priestly attire, but clothed in filthy garments. At his right hand stood the adversary Satan. The high priest was pleading before the angel of the Lord and Satan opposing. In a certain sense it was a judicial representation. A guilt is mentioned which was removed. Joshua is opposed by Satan, as Joshua as high priest represented the people and their sins. The Lord rebuked Satan. The pleading of Joshua prevailed. The angel of the Lord commands attendant angels to take away the filthy garments and clothe Joshua in festal robes. A clean miter was put on his head. This is a typical scene which will be fulfilled at the final restoration of the Jewish or Israelitish nation. "For, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." This refers to the Messiah. The stone set before Joshua was a symbol of the Kingdom of God. Compare the stone kingdom following the final form of the Roman empire according to Dan. 3. The Kingdom of God on earth is in its appearance to the worldly mind like a rough stone, but by the sevenfold radiation of the Spirit it will become a costly and precious stone of celestial brilliancy. The iniquity of the land (Palestine) will be removed in one day. The atonement on Calvary is the basis, and the practical redemption on the day of the Lord will be the result. "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree."

The fifth vision is also typical. The event at the time of Joshua and Zerubbabel will have its antitypes in the fulfilment in the latter days at the Second Advent period. This is plain from Rev. 11. 3, 4: "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth." In O. T. times the Kingdom of God was one visible theocracy, represented by one candlestick. In Rev. 1 the spiritual phase of the kingdom is not shown to John as one candlestick with seven branches, but as seven candlesticks and the Lord in the midst of them. In the O. T. vision Joshua and Zerubbabel are the representatives of the priesthood and royal government, but in the N. T. vision the Lord is both priest and king. Joshua and Zerubbabel are the types of the two witnesses in Rev. 11. The two witnesses are the antitypes. This will be further discussed later.

The sixth night vision throws light on the final judgment of the symbolical Babylon. This vision presents in its introductory part the sins of commercialism. The flying roll was said to be the curse, because the curse was inscribed on it. The Jews who had returned from Babylon had been exposed to the temptations of commercialism, and the Jews to this day have become a race of traffickers. We all know how in our day the Jews control the money market to a great extent. Most wars depend upon and are caused by commercialism. In this connection read the judgment scene in Rev. 18, and how the merchants then weep and mourn, according to verses 11–19.

The seventh night vision pictures the final judgments of the nations. The four chariots are not figures of the four world powers, because the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman powers were successive empires. The four judgment chariots go out at the same time and punish the nations. The prophet saw the chariots coming forth between two mountains of brass, which proves the figurative character of the mountains. The natural basis of the vision may be the mountain hills of the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Zion. Both are named as places from which the Lord judges. The place between the mountains is then the valley of Jehoshaphat. Compare ch. 14 and Joel 3. 2. The final judgment of nations gathered to war will be in Palestine.

The last part of ch. 6 depicts typically the crowning of Joshua, who is here a type of the future real priest-king, the Messiah, called in these visions the Branch. When the visions are superseded by the reality, the Messiah or Christ will appear as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The night visions of Zechariah illumine the night as a beacon light until the day dawns. The last part of Zechariah presents some scenes during the First Advent and stirring events at the Second Advent period. These final events will be studied in connection with the nineteenth chapter of Revelation.

SECTION FIVE

BEACON LIGHTS AND PROPHETICAL MARKS IN THE GOSPELS.

7. *THE SEVENTH BEACON LIGHT and Prophetical Marks During the First Advent.*

These lights are more like sunbeams than beacon lights, because the incarnation of the Son of God has taken place, Christ has come and the prophetical sayings of Jesus Christ are direct revelations. Christ is the greatest prophet. When He who descended from heaven ascended to heaven all the prophecies of the First Advent were fulfilled. Whatever He said was God's direct utterance. Therefore His prophetical sayings are as sun light on the future. In Heb. 1. 1, 2 we read: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." The direct sayings in prophecy by the Son of God are not visions, but they have been recorded in the Gospels by inspired men. The synoptics have the fullest records. By harmonizing these records we receive a very harmonious complex of the eschatological discourses of Christ.

The following passages should be carefully read: Mt. 24. 1–42; Mk. 13. 1–30; Lk. 17. 23–37; 21. 5–36. The disciples spoke to the Lord concerning the buildings of the temple and the costly wonderful stones. "And Jesus said unto him (the questioner), Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." This remark of Christ caused the disciples to wonder not only about the future of the temple, but also in regard to events beyond. When they came to the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" Mk. 13. 2–4. In Mt. 24. 3 on account of further questioning the question summarized was the following: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" The question is double or in fact triple. The first concerns the destruction of the temple, the second the return of the Lord, and the third the end of the world. Luke relates especially or more fully the destruction of Jerusalem and the general signs which do not directly betoken the Second Coming. The break in his description occurs with the 24th verse of chapter 21. The continuous long period of the times of the Gentiles is only mentioned in the end of verse 24. With verse 25 he mentions concisely the signs of the end of the age. He does not describe the abomination of desolation as Matthew does, because it belongs to the near close of the times of the Gentiles. In Matthew the break occurs with the 14th verse and in Mark with the 10th verse. Both in Matthew and Mark the long period is designated as the time of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom for a testimony, and Matthew states: "And then shall the end come." In the 15th verse the outstanding sign of the last days is made prominent. We quote the verse: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand)," etc. The prophecies in the 16th–20th verses are in Lk. 21. 20–24 placed in connection with the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem which occurred A.D. 70. What took place then was a type of what will happen when the army of the political Antichrist and the armies of all nations are represented on the battlefields in Palestine. Compare Armageddon and also Zech. 14. 2–4. The warnings are the same in Matthew and Mark as in Luke. The prophecies in Mt. 24. 4–13, Mk. 13. 5–9, Lk. 21. 8–19 have occurred more or less all the time. These signs are, as we have stated before, remote and general. Christ says therefore: "The end is not yet." Besides the abomination of desolation and the Antichrist, the outstanding signs of the last times will be the great tribulation, and immediately after the tribulation of those days there will be an extraordinary darkening of the sun and moon, upheaval in the starry worlds and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Compare Joel 2. 30, 31: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh." The great tribulation will especially be experienced in Jerusalem and all over Palestine, but it is evident that it will also extend more or less to all parts of the earth. Christ warns those who live in Jerusalem at the time of the setting up of the abomination of desolation that they should flee unto the mountains. In regard to the abomination of desolation which is set up in the holy place compare Dan. 12. 11 and Rev. 13. 14, 15. Christ warns against false Christs and against deceptions that Christ is in the wilderness or in some inner chamber. Christ's return will not be secret, but as stated in Mt. 24. 27, it will be as the lightning coming from the east and continuing to the west. In this connection it is interesting to read Rev. 6. 12–17. Notice the 16th verse and that this takes place before the seventh seal begins. In the description of this verse it is stated that the kings, the princes, the chief captains, the rich, the strong, every bondman and freeman hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and they ask the mountains and rocks to hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. There are evidently many scenes in the Second Advent period. In the admonitions following the main descriptions of the events as given in Luke 21st chapter Christ says in the 28th verse: "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." We should emphasize the word *begin.* Ponder also upon verse 36: "But watch we at every season making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." This proves that true and watching Christians living at the time will escape "all these things that shall come to pass" and that they will stand before the Son of man. Some students of prophecy claim that this is impossible, because the Christians must pass through tribulation to enter the Kingdom of God. This is true so far as tribulation is concerned, and true Christians living at the beginning of the last troubles will surely have tribulation, but they may escape the worst part of the tribulation called the great, which will reach its climax in Palestine and in the kingdom of Antichrist. We must not forget that Christ admonished His disciples who were in

Jerusalem at the approach of the destruction of the city to flee from this place and those living in Judaea likewise. Compare Lk. 21. 20–24. The 24th verse proves clearly that this refers to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D. In Mt. 24. 15–21 and in Mk. 13. 14–19 the same admonition is given to the Christians who live in Palestine at the time when the abomination of desolation is standing in the holy place. The holy place must be the temple site in Jerusalem. It is not stated that the temple is rebuilt. Part of it may be, and the altar of burnt offering must have been put up, as Dan. 12. 11 speaks of the discontinuance of the offering. The little or 11th horn, the political Antichrist, will break the covenant of seven years according to Dan. 9. 27. From the warnings in the Synoptics it is therefore plain that Christ permitted His followers to leave Judaea when armies besieged Jerusalem in the year 70, and the same admonition is given to His followers in the last days, when the abomination of desolation begins and is standing in the holy place. Christ clearly and plainly proves that Daniel's prophecy about the abomination of desolation belongs to the future and that it was fulfilled neither at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes nor at the destruction of Jerusalem. In the first place He speaks of it as future in His time, and in the second place He speaks of a period during which the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations before the end of the world. Then follows the abomination of desolation and therefore not at the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D. Notice also that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. These times have not been fulfilled. The Gentiles still have the power in Jerusalem. The Turks are not ruling there, but the Gentiles have the mandate over Palestine and Jerusalem according to the order of the League of Nations. The Mosque is there and has been for a long period, but clearly this cannot be the fulfilment of the prophecy in regard to the abomination of desolation, but only be partly a type of the desecration of the Holy place. The Jews cannot remove the Mosque and rebuild their temple. Many Jews have returned to Palestine, and Zionism is a strong movement; but there are more Mohammedans in the Holy Land than Jews and there are many Christians. The prophecies of the Restoration will not be accomplished by the present attempt of restoration. We must not forget that the abomination of desolation and the great tribulation belong to the Times of the Gentiles, although there will be a partial return and a covenant by which the Jews are privileged to take steps to rebuild their temple and hold sacrificial service on the Holy place. But we know from other passages of the Scriptures that the covenant will be broken when the great tribulation and Jacob's trouble, which starts in Jerusalem and Palestine, will usher in the last years of Antichrist's satanic rule. Compare Dan. 9. 27; 12. 1, 2; Jer. 30. 4–7; Rev. 12. As to the abomination of desolation Christ does not describe whether it is a person or an image, but it will be so evident and outstanding as a sign that there will not need to be a mistake as to the meaning.

In the prophecies, as in Matthew 24th chapter, we find signs and events that are given in a settled order, by which we may know that the Lord's glorious advent follows certain events. We find in the 15th verse the outstanding sign of the abomination of desolation; then follows the great tribulation; immediately after this follow the tremendous nature signs and wonders and finally the glorious coming of our Lord. But with the 37th verse begins a statement which gives the impression that there are no outstanding signs as Christ will come suddenly. We read: "And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man." Then follows a description of conditions which may fit our days and other days. Things run as usual. In the time of Noah the people had been warned just as they are warned more or less in our days, "Until the day that Noah entered into the ark." The flood came and took them all away except the few that were with Noah in the ark. In comparing Lk. 17. 22–29 we read also of Lot. When he went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone and destroyed them all. Christ says in the 30th verse: "After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed." Then consider from verse 34 the remaining verses of the chapter: "I say unto you, In that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. And they answering say unto him. Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together." This was said by the Lord in connection with discourses on His second coming. The same is the connection in Mt. 24. He speaks of His Advent as lightning. In regard to those to be taken the disciples ask: "Where, Lord?" There has been opinions as to His answer that are very opposite. Without denying the great difficulty in considering this idiomatic expression, it seems to be clear that it is a reference to one of the judgment scenes in the last days. The eagles are not the old Roman eagles at the destruction of Jerusalem. Besides, eagles are figurative expressions also in a good sense. Compare Is. 49. 31; Dt. 32. 11, 12; Ps. 103. 5; Ex. 19. 4, etc. The carcass of Mt. 24. 28 and the body of Lk. 17. 37 refer to the same thing. The question of the disciples concerned where those taken would be brought. Other passages answer that they would be translated to meet the Lord at His Advent in company with the saints who belong to the first resurrection. Christ does not explain this matter, but His answer, as far as we have it, proves that those taken will be with Him when Christ executes judgment on the Beast and the False Prophet and their confederate armies. These confederated enemies constitute "the carcass" and "the body." They are called the carcass. because they are according to the first original meaning a fallen thing, a failure, a thing overthrown. They are called the body as they were an army confederated as one body against Christ. The Lord will come with His saints according to Zech. 14. 5; Jude 14; Rev. 19. 14. When the Lord comes with His heavenly armies, Antichrist and his armies will be overthrown. We will study this further when we reach in our expositions Rev. 19.—Christ in His eschatological discourses does not enter into details as we find them in the book of Revelation. And He does not explain the chronological order of all the events. He does not state the relation of time between the so-called rapture and the glorious Coming. And as to the exact time of the Advent period He says: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." This was spoken by Him in His State of

Humiliation, but now as He is in the State of Exaltation, He evidently knows the time.

In the Gospel of John Christ speaks of the resurrection in the last days. We will quote only a few verses: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6. 39), compare v. 40; "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice" (5. 28) ; "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (11. 25, 26). Notice that a believer, though he die, he shall live when Christ raises him on the last day, and notice also that if a believer lives when Christ returns, he shall never experience death. A Christian who dies will not taste death, although he experiences the separation of body and soul, and his soul will be transferred to Paradise, where he remains in comfort until the day of resurrection. If, on the other hand, he lives here on earth at Christ's Advent he will without dying be changed and transplanted to meet the Lord in the sky. Christ in His discourses does not state if the resurrection of the wicked dead will take place shortly after the raising of the children of God, but we can infer that the taking of some and the leaving of others will follow the resurrection of the believers. The resurrection of the unbelievers follows, but Christ does not state the time. The fact of the raising of both believers and unbelievers is plainly expressed. In John 5. 28 we read: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice," and in the 29th verse follows: "and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Nothing is stated as to the possible time intervening.

SECTION SIX

BEACON LIGHTS AND PROPHETICAL MARKS IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

8. *THE EIGHTH BEACON LIGHT and Prophetical Marks.*

Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians are Beacon Lights as to events of the last days. Although in the First Epistle he describes what will happen at Christ's return, we will in the eighth Beacon Light consider an outstanding sign of the approach of Christ's glorious coming. On account of what Paul wrote in 1 Th. 4. 13–17 the Thessalonians were troubled and confused as to the order of events. Paul, therefore, corrects the misconception in his second epistle, chapter two. He warns them that they should not think that the day of the Lord was *now* present. He calls their attention to the fact that the Second Coming will be preceded by a *falling away* which finally will lead to the manifestation of the son of perdition, who will exalt himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped, and that he will set himself up as God. Paul also refers to what he told them when he was with them. In the 6th verse he continues: "And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season." When he was with them, he had evidently pictured the future, and how the churches would increase and develop. He had probably told them how thereafter heresies would arise, and that an apostasy would follow which would result in the manifestation of the great apostate, the lawless one "whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." He explained, therefore, that the coming of the Lord must be preceded by the apostasy and the apostate, the son of perdition. They were also informed that the son of perdition was a person "whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming." This proves that the "lawless one" will be on earth near the Second Advent and at the glorious Coming of Christ. The apostasy will therefore continue a long time just as history has proved it to be. Paul also says that the mystery of lawlessness worked already in his time. Everything had to develop; therefore the Church also. The elect were the Church in the strict sense, and they as the children of God had to be gathered. Compare 1 Th. 1. 4, 5. It is therefore evident that "what restraineth" will continue to a certain point. But it is not so easy to explain the second part of verse 7 in 2 Th. 2. We quote: "only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way." The last words can also be rendered "from the midst," although that would be just as mysterious. Paul possibly told the Church in Thessalonica, but he did not explain it in his letter. There have been many conjectures. We pass by the idea of the Historical school of prophecy, that the Hinderer was the civil power of Rome. Some of the Futurists hold that the Christian State hinders the manifestation of the Lawless one. Others hold that the Holy Spirit is the Hinderer who will be taken from the midst of churchly activities when the Church period ends. The Holy Spirit was sent from the Father and the Son when the Church was, so to say, officially organized on the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension of Christ. The Holy Spirit is now in the Church just as really as Christ, the Son of God, was on earth from His incarnation until His Ascension. This view has the advantage in exegesis in holding that the Hinderer is a person and not a personification. The seventh verse speaks of the Hinderer as a person. There is another view, to-wit: that the Antichrist cannot appear as such before the first resurrection and translation of living saints. According to this opinion the hindrance and the hinderer are removed when the true living Church is taken and snatched up to meet the Lord in the sky. Then the Lawless one would develop to be the first beast. This was not possible so long as the true, watching believers were on earth. If we explain the figures in the book of Revelation, chapter 12, the woman would be the Church as she appears, or the visible Church, the male child represents the true Church to be born, and when born, translated to heaven, the dragon is Satan who tries to hinder this birth and translation; then follows the war in the sky when Satan is cast down to the earth, and then the Antichrist, possessed by the devil, becomes the Beast of chapter 13. We should also notice that "male child" in chapter 12 is neuter in Greek and therefore represents both male and female. The Greek word refers therefore to all true Christians who are translated at the first act in the Second Advent. We will also present another view, namely, that the Hinderer is an angel. If we follow the grammatical rule of Hermeneutics, the Hinderer could not be something abstract. It could not be some civil power; rather it should be the Ruler. The Hinderer had to be a person. The apostle Paul would be precluded as he did not live to the time of the Antichrist. Nero was not the Son of perdition, the Lawless one or the Antichrist, because he did not live to the time of the Second Advent of Christ. According to Paul the Hinderer or Restrainer restrained already at the time when he (Paul) wrote the epistle to the Thessalonians. The Hinderer has continued to restrain and will restrain "until he be taken out of the way." The Hinderer could not therefore be a human being, because no man could live so long. The Hinderer must therefore be either divine or an angel. Both the Father and Son are precluded, which is so self-evident that we do not need to argue the point. In the Trinity remains then only the Holy Spirit. The view that the Holy Spirit is the Hinderer might be feasible, if the Second Advent was an ordinary day or a very short period, but there are many transactions to take place on the Lord's day which preclude the possibility that the Second Coming of Christ would cover only an ordinary day of twelve hours. If the translation of the true living Church were only one act which would also remove the entire Church in the same act, then it might be argued that the Holy Spirit would leave when the Church, His workshop, was taken from the earthly scenes to meet the Lord in the sky. The Holy Spirit has been dwelling and working in the Church from the founding of the Church on the first Christian Pentecost, and will continue His work until the Church period closes. It cannot be said that the Holy Spirit leaves when Antichrist appears. The time of Antichrist is not a day, but a period even if short. We remember that the Historical School of prophecy claims that the period of Antichrist lasts 1260 years and the Futurist School of prophecy hold that the time is seven years or at least three and a half years. According to the book of Revelation there are Christians on earth during the great tribulation and there are such Christians who refuse to receive the sign of the Beast. Is it likely that the Holy Spirit had left them? If He were the Hinderer, He had to be taken away before the Lawless one could appear as the Beast. In 2 Th. 2. 7, 8 the order of events is plainly stated. And in the book of Revelation we read in the 12th chapter about a war in heaven, which must mean in the sky as it cannot in this place mean the third heaven. Michael and his angels are warring with the dragon and his angels. It is stated that the dragon is Satan and that he was cast down to earth. The result is described not only in the last part of Rev. 12, but especially in the 13th chapter. In the last days the activity of angels will be more apparent. But the angels have been invisibly present and active in the long period from the first century, although they have not visibly revealed themselves. The reason for their silence and invisibility has not been clearly explained in the Scriptures, but indirectly we can understand that revelations and appearances from the spiritual world are not necessary in the Church period, when the Bible gives us all needed information. We are assured by the promises in Holy Writ that the Lord will take care of us and the interests of the Church. Our times after the Ascension of Christ and the apostolic age are tests of faith and hope until the return of our Redeemer. In the meantime the angels are also active in the work assigned them for the realization of the Kingdom of Glory. Gabriel and Michael and the whole heavenly host are busy just as in the time of Daniel and ever since. In Daniel, e. g. the 10th chapter, we are informed of how the angels had charge of kings and countries. It is therefore not impossible that the Hinderer or Restrainer in 2 Th. 2. 7 is an archangel who remains at his post and hinders the manifestation of the Lawless one until the time appointed. Then the angelic Hinderer will be taken out of the way by the order of the Lord and the last tremendous events will develop, ushering in the near approach of the Day of the Lord.

9. *THE NINTH BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks.

Paul had two revelations in regard to the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the transformation of the living children of God; the first he describes in 1 Th. 4. 13–17, and the second in 1 Cor. 15. 50–58. In these revelations he gives us the following information: When Jesus returns, God will bring with Him "even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus," and it is also stated "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." It is further revealed that the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible and that the mortal must put on immortality. Concerning the true, living Christians we are told: "Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." And in 1 Cor. 15. 51 we read: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed," and in the next verse: "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Paul writes to the Collossians, 3. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory."

Resurrection is a wonderful word and the beginning of the most wonderful fact of complete life. It is sad to wander in the most beautiful cemetery, and yet we love to sit at the graves of our dear ones and think of the great day. May we bring before our inner vision the day of resurrection, may we hear the trump and see the tombs opened, and again see our loved ones, and then experience ourselves changed in the twinkling of an eye! And then, think of the rapture in the clouds!

The greatest experience of all will be to see the Lord and be with Him for ever! No human pen can describe it.

All true Christians love these words: "We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed." Every Christian would like to be one of the deathless ones. But even if we cannot live until that glorious day, we will still be the children of resurrection. —

About nineteen hundred years have passed since Christ spoke of the translation of living saints at His return, and about a quarter of a century less since Paul penned his revelations concerning the first resurrection, the transformation of the living, true children of God, and the translation of both parties. We are so much nearer the great event. But there are no data in the Bible by which could be calculated how near we are the fulfilment of the prophecies. We only know that the apostasy has taken place and still continues. From other prophecies we can understand the outstanding signs as they appear. Paul's prophecies clearly state that the apostasy will culminate in the coming of the Son of perdition or the Lawless one. He will be a human being, but possessed by Satan. The possession will probably take place when Satan is cast down to the earth. Compare Rev. 12. The Lawless one may be suspected, or even known, before he becomes the Beast. At the time of his appearance he must have grown up. He will also be a child of his age. Even in our age, more than ever, lawlessness and anarchy are gaining dangerous power. But the Son of perdition may not immediately show himself as lawless. Judas Iscariot did not begin as a traitor. Note that Judas also is called the Son of perdition and was possessed by the devil. But at first he was a disciple and apostle. In the beginning the coming Son of perdition may be known as a churchman of the best character and as a genius. Later he will show his real character. Just as we should watch the signs of the times, so we should also watch for the appearance of a man that may be the one who will develop into the Lawless one, the Son of perdition or the political Antichrist assisted by the false Prophet.

This question is of intense interest to all believers who long for the return of Christ. Christians who belong to the Historical School of prophetic study hold that the Papacy or the Pope is Antichrist and that the False Prophet is represented by Mohammed and Mohammedanism. They therefore hold that the next event is the Second Coming of Christ. All who are adherents of the Futurist School of Prophecy say that the next event is the Ten-Kingdom Confederation, which will bring forth the emperor of the revived Roman empire, and that this emperor is the political Antichrist. This prophetical school holds that the Son of perdition or the Lawless one is identical with the emperor of the revived Roman empire which will result from the Ten-Kingdom Confederation. But there are also many prophetical students who claim that the Son of perdition in 2 Th. 2 is identical with the Second Beast in Rev. 13. John in his first epistle, ch. 2, speaks of many antichrists, but in the 22nd verse he says: "This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son." In Revelation 13 John speaks of two Beasts. And these two are the final manifestation of antichristianity. The different schools of prophecy are united in holding that the judgment and the Second Advent periods are comparatively not very far off.

But there are divergent views as to the placing in order of time of the first phase of the Second Coming with its resultant of the First Resurrection and Translation. Some hold that these resultants will precede the great tribulation, others that they will take place before the "vials," and still others, after the great tribulation. Paul in his epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians does not speak of anything which would throw light on the question of exact order as to time. In 1 Th. 5. 2 he gives the information that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, and in the 6th verse we are admonished to watch. In 2 Th. 2 we are informed that the day of the Lord is not at hand, before the apostasy has taken place and "the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." By the light of other prophecies he may be manifest before he is the Beast. The close students of prophecy may even hold that he is already living and active, although he has not reached his climax of power. Compare, e. g., Rev. 17. 12, 13. There are many concurring events from which conclusions may be drawn that the political Antichrist is approaching. But although we live in a time when, comparatively speaking, fulfilment is very close after so many centuries of waiting, since the Thessalonians were troubled in this matter, we should be careful to study the remaining prophecies to be fulfilled. In such research we should not forget that in fulfilment sometimes events move very fast. In concluding our remarks on 2 Th. 2 we will only add that the chapter does not approach the question of time during the manifestation of the Lawless one, when the waiting believers may expect "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him," but it must be before the time when the Lord shall slay the Lawless one or the Beast, because Christ comes first *for* the saints and then *with* the saints.

SECTION SEVEN

BEACON LIGHTS AND PROPHETICAL MARKS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

10. *THE TENTH BEACON LIGHT and Prophetical Marks.*

With the seventh section we begin the study of the book of Revelation. It is not our intention to write an exegesis of every verse in every chapter, but our plan is to give the summary contents of this book, especially from chapter four, and therefore concerning things to be.

The book of Revelation is held by many to be a concealment instead of a revelation, but it is an apocalypse and not an apocrypha. To many this book is a sealed volume and a mystery which no one should attempt to solve. It is true that there are many figures which are difficult to understand. On account of these difficulties in the way of interpretation there are many Christians and even preachers who rarely read this prophetic book, although the Master through John pronounced a blessing on those who read this book and keep the things written therein. The subject of this book is the Revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ and the events related to it. In many instances the book interprets itself. As an example read verse 20 and some of the preceding verses of the first chapter. Some readers are puzzled for the reason that Christ wrote only to seven churches, but these churches and their pastors were evidently representatives of the whole Church and its different phases. The condition and history of these churches were such that they in outline depicted the whole Church to the last days and also the seven church periods during which successively the prominent traits of each church would especially stand forth. This view would not prevent an overlapping of the periods. All the conditions are existing more or less during all the periods, but are more outstanding in the period represented by the successive churches. The seven parables in Mt. 13 have likewise an analogous and prophetic significance. The parables may not correspond exactly in time to the church periods, but the time is so nearly the same that no attention to the difference is necessary. The parables cover, as do the epistles, the whole Church and have outstanding distinctions signifying the successive periods. The epistle to Ephesus and the parable of the sower portray the outgoing from the world, the first love, the sowing of the Gospel seed, the first missionary activities and the foundation of the Church to 250 A.D. The epistle to Smyrna and the parable of the tares among the wheat picture how heresies and persecutions arose up to 313. The epistle to Pergamus and the parable of the mustard seed cover the period from 313 or 323 to the seventh century, when the Church developed from a small beginning and Christianity became the religion of the nations. The name Pergamus signifies both a tower and marriage. The kingdom as a church ruled the empire and entered into marriage with the world. Then follows the Thyatira period, which is also depicted as the leaven. Jezebel represents here especially the Papacy. But the kingdom of God is even in the dark ages like a leaven which permeates society and exercises a mighty influence for good. Some prophetical interpreters claim that the leaven represents an evil influence and not a good, but what would then become of the kingdom! It is plainly stated that the kingdom of heaven is like a leaven and, therefore, the leaven in this place cannot be something evil. The law of interpretation of parables demands that we emphasize the main topic, namely, what the kingdom of heaven is like. The kingdom of God can never become evil. A church may become false as the Roman Church did, but even in the dark ages the kingdom of God was working in the Church. In explaining parables it is necessary to hold forth the leading issue and not enter into details. Not every item need mean something. The fifth letter and the parable of the hidden treasure follow the preceding, although partly overlapped by it. Even in the darkest Middle Ages the kingdom is present as a hidden treasure. The Sardis period overlaps the next into the beginning of the reformatory movements. Neither should we forget the pre-reformers. In reading the epistle to Sardis we notice in the 4th verse a reference to persons who remind us of the reformers. The hidden treasure was found at the close of this period and at the entrance into the Philadelphia period. The Bible was no longer hidden but became an open book. Think of Luther when he found the Bible and all the consequences from this finding! The preaching of justification by faith alone placed the reformation on a firm basis. In the beginning of the Philadelphia period the door was opened for the Gospel and true freedom. The precious pearl was found. Brotherly love and the Gospel pearl period have spread true Christianity in divers ways through missionary activities and charity. This period has not ceased in our day and is overlapping the seventh period. But it is evident that the so-called net and Laodicea period has already begun. The net is cast into the sea of nations and gathers both good and evil fishes. The meaning of the Greek word Laodicea is the rule of democracy or the rule of the people. Empires and kingdoms fall. We live in the dangerous formation period of radical socialism, anarchism and bolshevism. Russia is an example of the great dangers of bolshevism. In the Church lukewarmness and apostasy are spreading. True Christianity is also gaining victories through the Missionary work on the home and foreign field or, if we use the figure of the seventh parable, the net is thrown into the sea of peoples and gathers all kinds of persons and things. The Church as the kingdom of grace has attained world power, and the nominally Christian States rule the world, but in these nominal Christian countries apostasy, modernism, rationalism, worldliness and love of money undermine the social life. When the Church becomes more and more worldly and the so-called Christians live like the people of the world, how will the nominal Christians act in the hour of trial which will come upon the whole world? Most of these so-called Christians will go over to the side of antichristianity. It may happen that many weak Christians will fall away; especially will this be the case during persecutions. The Lord be praised that true Christianity is still a power in the Church, the Bible is read more than other books and a majority of the ministers preach the main doctrines of the Gospel. May we watch and pray in these perilous times!

Although the seven churches and the seven parables picture the Church in all the periods, it is very evident that each church and parable preëminently describes in outline seven consecutive periods. As these periods more or less overlap one another, we cannot definitely state when, e. g., the Philadelphia period ends, although the Laodicea period has begun. The nearer we approach the judgment period, the Laodicean period will be more outstanding. The second and third chapters of the book therefore give a synopsis of the Church in her experience and condition up to the time of the Second Advent period. If Christ had written epistles to individual congregations, He hardly would have selected these seven congregations in Asia Minor, and He would not have written only to seven. The whole presentation and description from the first chapter gives the impression of a prophetical plan. And as the book of Revelation concerns mainly the future manifestation of Christ, the letters are very short. The gospels and epistles in the New Testament contain in detail all that the Church needs to know in regard to salvation. The book of Revelation treats, therefore, mostly of matters belonging to the periods of consummation and practical redemption. But the events pictured in this prophetical book have their historical background, and the climax is described in this book from chapter six. The fourth and fifth chapters picture a heavenly scene introductory to the final events. John is here transferred to higher regions whether bodily or spiritually. In chapter one, verse ten, John says that he was in the spirit on the Lord's day. The Lord's day cannot in this verse mean Sunday, because he did not need to be in the Spirit only on Sunday, and if it means that he began to see the visions on a Sunday, they would continue during the week days. It is not likely that he saw all the visions on one Sunday. John had to write the letters and the visions to the churches. In this connection we may also state that the book of Revelation was not written only for the seven churches, but for the whole Church represented by the seven. The Lord's day in the 10th verse signifies the Second Advent period, which the prophets in the O. T. call the Day of the Lord. John was in the Spirit transferred to the Second Coming period according to chapter 4, and according to ch. 1. 10 he was also in the Spirit on the Lord's day and saw the Lord in glory, but he was not transferred to the higher sky-heaven. The reason was that the Lord in His love desired to reveal to John and through him to the Church that, although in glory, He was present in the churches and took care of His servants. The vision of the first chapter is referred to in verse 19 in the words "which thou sawest," the second and third chapters, which describe the churches, are described by the words "the things which are." The conditions described in these words continue, but we have reached the seventh or Laodicean period, although the Philadelphian period is still overlapping. Then follows what is expressed in the words "the things which must come to pass hereafter."

In the fourth chapter we are informed that John was transported to heaven. The word heaven has several meanings, and therefore we do not know the exact location, but it was somewhere in the higher regions of space, where the heavenly scene was set with the judgment throne and its glorious surroundings, and from this throne the judgment actions were to be directed. Read the wonderful description in the text, as no attempt to picture this majestic scene by human phrases is possible. After the wonderful things that John had seen and heard as related in ch. 1—3, the angel who said, "Come up hither," added: "and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter." Rev. 4. 1.

He saw round about the throne twenty-four thrones and upon these twenty-four elders sitting arrayed in white garments and upon their heads crowns of gold. From the throne of divine majesty proceeded lightnings, voices, and thunders, and before the throne were burning seven lamps of fire, signifying the seven radiations of the Spirit's activities. Before the throne stretched a glassy sea like unto crystal. John also saw four living beings in the midst of and around the throne. Who are signified by the twenty-four elders? They are not angels, as we can ascertain by reading ch. 5. 9, especially if the readings of Codex Sinaiticus, Basilianus, and Vaticanus are correct. Other manuscripts also have the same reading as Codex Sinaiticus. Sinaiticus and the others mentioned read "Us." Codex Alexandrinus does not have this reading, but Codex Sinaiticus has the same value as Alexandrinus. Dr. Tregelles held that the reading "US" was correct. The contexts and parallels all argue for the reading of "US." In that case the text should read: "didst purchase *us* unto God with thy blood of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

These elders could not be disembodied souls, because they are crowned. The coronation time occurs at the Second Advent. Paul speaks of receiving the "crown of righteousness" *at that day,* the day of Christ. Compare 2 Tim. 4. 8. The crowning does not take place at death. The angels are not crowned, and, therefore, these elders are human beings. They are called elders as they belong to the first resurrection and translation. Christ is the first-born of the dead. No one before Him was raised from the dead with a celestial and glorified body. There were others who arose immediately after Christ, although their graves were opened before. Compare Mt. 27. 51, 52. But they were not raised before Christ, because He was, as stated before, the first-born or first-fruits of the resurrection. But being raised when

Christ had arisen, they became the Elders in the first resurrection. They did not rise to die again. They rose with glorified bodies. We do not know the number of them. The number twenty-four represents many more, just as the priests and Levites under the O. T. economy served in courses of twenty-four. In the old temple service there could be thousands, although only twenty-four served at the same time. Others would follow them. To the Elders of the resurrection and translation belong also those who are raised and translated at the Second Coming of Christ. In 1 Cor. 15. 23 we read: "But each in his own order." Compare Dan. 12. 13.

Who are signified by the four living beings? We will not discuss the different opinions held. If the reading of Codex Sinaiticus is the original they would also be human beings in glory, because they sing the same song as the elders. The figurative language is taken from the O. T. Compare Ezek. 1, in the description of the Cherubim. These had the appearance of a lion, a calf, a man and an eagle. Jewish writers inform us these figures were wrought upon the standards of the four divisions of the tribes of Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness. When camping, the tabernacle of God was placed in the midst of the quadrangular encampment, and the tribes were placed in four divisions around the tabernacle: Judah with Issachar and

Zebulon on the east; Reuben with Simeon and Gad on the south; Ephraim with Manasseh and Benjamin on the west; Dan with Asher and Naphtali on the north. The four living beings represented therefore many more. The four living beings as represented in the vision were leaders in the worship and commanders in directing the proceedings when the seals were opened by the Lord for execution.

John saw further that in the right hand of God on the throne was a book "written within and on the back," sealed with seven seals. A strong angel was heard to proclaim with a great voice: "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals?" No one was able to open the book. John wept much on account of this. But one of the elders consoled him and said: "Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof." John saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living beings and elders a Lamb standing "as though it had been slain." This Lion-Lamb took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. This Lion-Lamb was Christ. When He suffered on earth as the atoning Lamb, He said on the cross: "It is finished," but at His Second Advent He comes as the Redeemer and the royal Lion, and after the practical redemption He will again say that it is finished or done. Compare 16. 17.

What does the book signify? It could not be a history of the world or a Church history in the ordinary sense. And it was not a prophetical scroll, although it contained the solution of the greatest problem in prophecy. John would not have wept as he did, if he had not known that the opening of the book concerned the decision in regard to the practical redemption of the world. It referred to the redemption of alienated property and concerned the question how paradise lost should become paradise regained. The figurative scene is taken from the Jewish laws in redeeming a mortgage on property. A sealed scroll with specifications in regard to alienation and repurchase of possessions had the form of a mortgage deed. The nearest of kin had the right to purchase the mortgage according to specifications. Mankind lost paradise by the fall. The title deeds of paradise were in the hand of Almighty God. The scroll with seven seals described in the text contains the deeds. Christ, the Lamb of God, becomes the Redeemer or in Hebrew *Goel,* and He takes the book from the One sitting upon the throne and He opens the seals one after the other, as described in chapters six to eight. When the Redeemer took the book the four living beings and the elders, representing a great company, together sang a mighty *Gloria,* accompanied by the voices of more than two hundred million angels: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing," and then the universal refrain: "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever."

The glorious scene described in the 4th and 5th chapters was not seen on earth. John saw it "in the Spirit," having been transported to the heavenly region. It was not therefore a beacon light to the people on earth, but possibly caused reactions on earth at the time of the fulfilment of the celestial scenes. There will be many signs showing the nearness of the judgment period of the last days to observing watchers. But the worldly people and lukewarm Christians will not see anything and therefore continue to say: "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

At what time shall we locate the scene of the 4th and 5th chapters? The Historical School of prophecy places it at the time when John saw it. But John says: "After these things" which he had seen as he had been transferred to the Lord's day and saw the heavenly vision at the Second Advent period. It is therefore probable that the setting of this scene will take place towards the close of the Laodicean period. The exact time only the Lord knows. The Laodicean period may overlap the Judgment period as the previous periods overlapped one another.

Many opinions have been held in regard to the contents of the seals. The Historical school, having set the scene of the 4th and 5th chapters towards the close of the first century, holds that the seals, trumpets and vials have been and are fulfilled in history. We will not tire the reader by reciting all the guesses, schemes and fancies of the historical interpretations, although some of them are seemingly very striking. There may, for example, be inchoative rehearsals before events take real shape in actual fulfilment. In chronology we may find wonderful coincidences and fulfilments in counting days for years, although the real fulfilment evidently must be that days mean days and years mean years. The text and context will usually show the correct acceptation. Readers who are interested in striking calculations of the Historical School of prophecy will find some examples in the Eschatology of my Christian dogmatics, pages 509–511.

In regard to Revelation from chapter six inclusive of chapter 17, although the climax of fulfilment is future, there is a historical background. The book of Revelation in these chapters mostly presents the climax of the historical background which culminates in the actual future realization. Each seal opened has therefore a history behind it.

At this place we deem it wise to call the attention of the reader to certain principles of interpretation. We should always investigate what is the grammatical meaning. As there are a number of figures, symbols, Hebrew idioms and metonymies, we should not be led astray and think that the entire prophetical book is figurative. In many instances the text itself will inform us whether the statements are to be understood literally or figuratively. We should also use common sense and not imagine that it is a figure when a literal meaning may be possible. When parallels occur we should investigate whether they are true or false, because not all parallels are of the same class.

11. *THE ELEVENTH BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks.

In describing the fourth and fifth chapters in the preceding Beacon Light we mentioned that the wonderful scene occurred in the higher regions above earth and could not therefore be a beacon light for the people on earth. The sixth chapter, on the other hand, will be a beacon light to people living at the time of its fulfilment, and to all of us it throws light on the future and shows us prophetical marks which should be carefully noted.

We who evidently live in the seventh period or the Laodicean, although, as stated before, the sixth period may overlap into the seventh, should study the signs of the times. Otherwise the last times may come on us unawares. The greater part of humanity, not to say of the Church, never thinks of the last days. Many Christians never pay attention to questions of eschatology. They only think of death, and to them the Second Coming of Christ is so remote that they have no interest in it. But, if we love Jesus Christ intensely, we should long for His appearance, and we should therefore diligently study such books of the Bible that treat of the Second Advent. In the New Testament the book of Revelation principally relates to the last times and the Second Coming.

The book of Revelation has a Story Thread. It is like a sermon with an introduction, subject, outlines and conclusion. In the story itself there are some breaks, like insets, parenthetical details, and views from different angles, but the outline Thread is always clear. The introduction we have in the first chapter, and in the second and third chapters we have a concise spiritual history of Christ's Church, in which He rules as the spiritual king. Some Bible students are puzzled because the Church is given so little space in the book of Revelation, when we consider that she has existed from the first Pentecost in the first century. But we must not forget that the Church and the spiritual kingdom of Christ is constantly referred to in the Gospels and Epistles. The object of the book of Revelation was to describe the Second Coming of Christ and the ushering in of the Kingdom of Glory. The fourth and fifth chapters picture the setting of the judgment throne and the beginning of the practical redemption. The great theme of the last book in the Bible is the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. The outline of the sermon or the story thread in its main divisions are the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven vials. As the trumpets come out from the seals and the vials from the seventh trumpet, it is evident that the structure of the book is built on the seven seals. The seventh seal is not concluded when the trumpets begin to sound, because the seven trumpets are divisions in the seventh seal and on account of the overlapping may begin in the sixth seal. And as the seven vials come out from the seventh trumpet, the seventh seal will continue until the seventh vial has been accomplished. The seals therefore include both the trumpets and the vials. Six of the trumpets are described in chapters eight and nine. The fifth trumpet is the first woe trumpet, the sixth trumpet is the second woe trumpet, and the seventh trumpet is the third woe trumpet. The seventh trumpet as to its beginning to sound is described in the fifteenth verse of chapter eleven. With this trumpet begins the Wrath of God on His enemies. The vials or bowls of wrath are described in chapter 16 and parallels. Intermingled with and between the seals and their divisions, we find the insets, etc., but the outline in seals, trumpets and vials is always plain and clear. The judgment of Babylon mentioned in the seventh vial of wrath is further described in detail in chapters 17 and 18. The nineteenth chapter pictures the great victory and climax of the Second Advent. Then follow the grand conclusions as described in the remaining chapters.

It is interesting to compare Mt. 24 and Rev. 6. Some claim that the general signs in Matthew are exactly the same and in the same order as Rev. 6 delineates the seals. But we should consider that concerning the general signs in Mt. 24 Christ says in verse 6: "but the end is not yet." The general signs are partly described inclusive of verse 14. In the beginning of chapter 24 there is nothing stated corresponding to seal one. Verse 4 in Matthew does not correspond with the first seal. Some have said that Antichrist is described in the first seal, but a sober reflection could not conclude that the rider on the white horse would be Antichrist. It would be a far-fetched exegesis to support a pet theory. The abomination of desolation which stands in connection with Antichrist is not mentioned before verse 15. If verse 5 speaks of false Christs, verses 23, 24 do the same. But verses 5–7 in Mt. 24 correspond better with the second and third seals as to order. There is also correspondence in the order of tribulation and the celestial signs. There is therefore a general correspondence of order. But Christ makes a clear distinction between general and special signs. To the latter belong such signs as the abomination of desolation and, according to Paul, the apostasy and the manifestation of the Man of sin even before the abomination in the holy place. Then there are also other exegetical difficulties, namely, where shall we locate the scene pictured in Rev. chapters 4 and 5? If the scene in chapters 4 and 5 is located in the first century, then the seals have been opened in their order from that time. In that case we would be approaching the views of the Historical School of prophecy. It is best to let the general signs be general and the special be special and outstanding. Then the scene in heaven of chapters 4 and 5 would be located towards the close of the Laodicean period. We will in another connection discuss the meaning of the 4th and 5th chapters in relation to the Second Coming of Christ.

The description of the opening of the seals begins in the 6th chapter. It is the Lamb that opens the seals. He—Christ—could not therefore be the rider on the white horse. One of the living beings spoke with a voice of thunder, "Come or go!" One of the living beings could not command the Lord. It is not revealed who was the rider, but it could be an angelic being. He received a crown, in this case a symbol of victory. The whole scene of a white horse and a bow does not betoken ordinary warfare. The next seal refers to war in the real sense. This first seal presents a moral and spiritual conquest. The Word may also be like a bow and a sword. At the time of the first seal the judgment period has begun, although the Laodicean period may overlap. The Gospel has been and is preached as a witness to all nations. As the judgment period approaches when the antichristian powers try to reach their climax in opposition to Christianity, the ministers of the Church must fight for the spiritual kingdom of Christ. We should always remember the words of Christ in Mt. 24. 4, 11: "Take heed that no man lead you astray. And many false prophets shall arise and shall lead many astray." After the grand scene in heaven described in Rev., chapters 4 and 5, when the first seal is opened, the conditions on earth are lamentable, which we can understand from the following seals. It is the time when apostasy leads to the manifestation of the Man of sin or perdition. Therefore a special intervention from above is necessary. John saw that the Lamb by opening the first seal was guarding the possessions of the Kingdom of God. The effects were felt on earth. The import of this seal continues until the victory is won as described Rev. 19, when the Lord Himself rides the white horse accompanied by the armies of heaven. With the first seal begins the judgment period, and the judgment on Antichrist the Great and the False Prophet is completed at the close of the seventh vial of the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal.

When the Lion-Lamb opens the second seal, another horse, which is red in color, appears with an angelic rider who takes away peace from earth and wields a great sword. If we reflect on the meaning of this, the picture is awful and terrific. The historical background of the second seal are all the wars in human history. The history of war among all nations, inclusive of the world war which began 1914, is so vast that thousands of large volumes could not adequately describe the sufferings of mankind. The second seal pictures the climax. It is clear that there will be many wars during the formation of the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy, and the culmination will be the battle at Armageddon as far as Bozra inclusive of Jerusalem. Among other prophecies, Jeremiah 25. 29–33 will then be fulfilled. In the 29th verse we read of "a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth." Each student of prophecy should read the whole passage. Each seal opened continues until its meaning is realized.

The third seal brings into view a black horse and its angelic rider. Famine naturally is one of the effects of war. All who lived during the last world war can at least understand what sufferings famine will bring. There have been many famines in the world, and to describe the pang of famine is impossible. Jeremiah 14. 1–6 and Lamentations 5. 10 ought to be read. Then consider the ruinous rates for wheat and barley when these were for sale, ch. 6. 5, 6.

But the next seal intensifies the suffering. The fourth seal reveals a pale horse, and its rider is called Death, and Hades follows with him. These have the power to kill the fourth part of earth with the sword, famine, pestilence and with wild beasts. Even if earth here should mean the empire of the political Antichrist or the old empire of Rome restored, it would be awful, but even in that case, the whole world would feel the effects. It is interesting in this connection to read Ezek. 14. 21: "For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!"

The sufferings during the preceding four seals are introductory to the great tribulation, as Christ speaks of more than one trumpet blast. The four seals imply tribulation, although not the great one.

There may be troubles in different countries during the development of the last great empire. There must be preparations in Palestine before the possibility of erecting the abomination of desolation on the holy place. This will be a plain sign to all who live in Palestine, and by modern communications it will be known in the whole world. But Christ warns them who live then in Judea to flee from Jerusalem. This will be heeded by the so-called remnant and by others, just as many Christians fled from Jerusalem before its destruction, and found a place of refuge. Compare Lk. 21. 20–24. In this connection we may call attention to the long period in which we live, before the 25th verse of Luke 21 is realized. The signs in the sun, moon, and stars belong to the sixth seal and the fifth seal must go before and be realized.

The fifth seal revealed to John disembodied souls of martyrs who had been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. This seal is the picture of persecution and martyrdom. In the opening of this seal there are no messengers from the throne, because the persecutions of the saints come from the devil. The living beings do not command, "Come or Go," for they are not interested in bringing sufferings on the saints of God. The seal opens and John sees an accession of martyrs who had been slain during this time of tribulation under the second, third and fourth seals, and other tribulations would be added unto them as we see according to the following chapters. When these martyr souls cried to the Lord in regard to the conditions on earth, they were told that they should rest a little while until their fellow servants also, who should be killed as they were, had fulfilled their course. These martyrs under the fifth seal represent the climax in martyrdom. The historical background is the long chain of martyrs from the beginning of Christianity. It would be impossible to picture correctly the sufferings of the martyrs. Every reader should study a history of martyrs and persecutions. When we consider the condition of these souls, it is evident that the dead are not sleeping in their soul-life. Their bodies rest in their graves, but their souls are living, seeing, hearing, and speaking. The souls cannot be annihilated. All the souls live unto God and the believers' souls are with the Lord. We should study all the passages concerning the dead. If this picture of the martyr souls is not as appealing to our feelings as Paul's description of the blessed dead, we should consider the different frame of the picture. Otherwise they were just as blessed. The blessed dead take the keenest interest in the affairs of their fellow brethren on earth and long with them for the realization of the kingdom of the Lord. Think of Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was a disembodied soul, but had a manifestation of such a nature as to be recognized as Moses. The martyr souls were also encouraged by receiving a white robe, a token of their justification and a sign of their coming resurrection.

When we compare the fifth and sixth seals with the eschatological discourses of Christ, we find that the great tribulation and the martyr sufferings of those days begin before the sixth seal and continue on. There are tribulations in the whole world more or less during the formation of the antichristian kingdoms leading to the empire of the Beast. After the setting up of the abomination of desolation on the temple site in Jerusalem begins "the trouble of Jacob," as it is also called. This part of the great tribulation is especially referred to by Christ in His eschatological address. It refers especially to the great tribulation as it develops in Judea. Read Mt. 24. 15–21. In the 29th verse we read that immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light. It is further stated that the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. This is the opening of the sixth seal.

The sun and moon must be taken here to mean the heavenly bodies in the literal sense. But the darkening in this case is not the usual. It is not, therefore, the annual darkenings announced in almanacs. The falling of the stars from the heavens will be an actual event, but the literal meaning may be either the falling of actual stars or it may mean meteoric bodies. In ordinary speech we say that stars fall in the sky when it is only meteoric showers. Such falling of stars often occurs, but sometimes in a tremendous way, such as happened Nov. 13th, 1833. In such cases it appears as if the actual stars were falling. When we further read in Rev. 6. 14 that the sky was removed as a scroll and was rolled up, it looks that way even now when there are cyclones and tornado storms. Haggai has prophesied in 2. 6: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and earth, and the sea, and the dry land." In such convulsions, mountains and islands will be moved out of their places. This has happened on a smaller scale. During the sixth seal the kings, the princes and the people generally, hiding themselves in caves, will cry to the mountains to fall on them and conceal them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. It also appears that at the fulfilment of this seal the general condition of society has not improved. Mankind has not grown better. The dream of a millennium through culture has not been realized. But the infidels will then know that there is a God.

In His eschatological address Christ gave a sketch of the last days. In the Revelation to John on Patmos He gave many details. The seals, trumpets and vials with insets and additions contain these details. The different stages of the great tribulation become more clear. There is tribulation not only before the great signs, but also after. In studying Christ's sketch as given in Matthew and Mark and the details in His Revelation and comparing Dan. 12. 1, it becomes clear that the great trouble of Jacob is related to the ending of the Times of the Gentiles. Compare also Jeremiah 30. 7. It is also interesting to notice that the sixth seal continues for some time, although successive to the preceding five seals. The seals begin in order as numbered, but each overlaps the one following. Therefore, the sixth seal continues after the opening of the seventh seal. The seventh seal is described as being opened in the eighth chapter. In the meantime the events of the sixth seal continue, and the people on earth experience what is written in verses 16 and 17 of chapter six. They dread to see Him who sits on the throne and fear the wrath of the Lamb. We quote the 17th verse: "For the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?"

The seventh chapter describes two insets or parenthetical visions which do not belong to the direct thread of the story. The company of the 144,000 sealed are on earth during several of the trumpets. Compare Rev. 9. 4. During the 5th trumpet it is stated that the infernal locusts should not hurt the sealed. The second company in the seventh chapter inset is seen in heaven and it is stated that they had come out of the great tribulation.

Before we describe the two different companies in the seventh chapter we will discuss a question of importance in regard to the placing of the first resurrection and the transformation of living saints at the Second Advent. Does the book of Revelation plainly point out the period of the Second Coming of Christ? To this question the definite answer may be given that the book from chapter 4 inclusive of chapter 20 treats of the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ or the Second Coming. Other parts of the Scriptures present different events and the Synoptics describe outstanding episodes. Paul plainly describes facts relating to the First Resurrection and events connected therewith. By reading all the Scriptures we obtain the full narrative. The book of Revelation does not repeat everything previously related. The same Christ who speaks to us in the Gospels reveals to us more details in the book of Revelation. We must always keep in mind that the Apocalypse of Christ is not an ordinary day but a period, whether short or long. The Advent of Christ in the last days begins to be described in the 4th and 5th chapters. It is true that the description in these chapters pictures a scene beyond the clouds which John saw in the upper regions. But he saw the judgment throne set and everything ready for transactions in connection with the Second Advent. The only difficulty which confronts the exegete consists in the textual silence as to a description of the First Resurrection and the transformation of living saints which will be the first event at the Second Advent, followed by the catching up of the raised and transformed to meet the Lord in the air. But this silence may depend on that there was no necessity to repeat what Christ and Paul had said in actual addresses without the medium of visions. Compare Mt. 24. 40, 41; Lk. 17. 34. 35; 1 Th. 4. 13–18; 1 Cor. 15. 50–58. The questions to be answered are the following: 1. Do chapters 4 and 5 in the book of Revelation give the impression that these events had taken place and that therefore these saints had been caught up and had met the Lord and are in the vision represented by the elders and perhaps also by the four living beings? 2. Will there be more than one such raising, transformation, and translation? We know that after Christ's own resurrection many saints were raised, entered the city and appeared unto many. Compare Mt. 27. 52, 53. These saints were not raised with the old corruptible bodies, but with the glorified bodies. Christ is the firstborn and those raised shortly after Him would be the elders. No resurrection has taken place during the N. T. Church periods. Observe the meaning of 1 Cor. 15. 23: "But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming." These belong to the first resurrection and there also the living transformed saints must be counted in, as the raised and transformed are together caught up to meet the Lord in the air. All these would then belong to the elders or the living beings, if a distinction shall be made. We remember from the foregoing remarks that they sing the same song of redemption. This is plain, if the reading of Codex Sinaiticus is correct.

In regard to the first question it is neither directly nor negatively answered in these chapters. In the book of Revelation there is no chapter explicitly describing the first resurrection and connected events, but the doctrine is clearly taught, and transformations, translations and visions picturing these things occur. There are circumstantial evidences which support the view that the Advent in its first approach takes place before the scene depicted in chapters 4 and 5. Christ comes first to meet in the upper regions His raised, transformed and translated saints. This event is not pictured in these chapters. Is there another chapter where this scene would fit in, when we consider that the third division of the book of Revelation presents mainly the Second Advent of Christ and collateral events? The scene could not be placed in the 19th chapter, when the last vials are nearing completion. There is no chapter where the meeting of the coming Lord and the "caught up" saints could more logically fit in than just before the 4th chapter. We should also notice that the elders are not described as angels. The elders wear golden crowns, besides sitting upon thrones. The crowning takes place in connection with resurrection and translation. Paul writes in 2 Tim. 4. 8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." In this connection we should also consider Lk. 21. 36: "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Compare also Rev. 3. 10, where it is stated: "I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." These verses plainly teach that at the Second Coming there are Christians who will escape the great trial or tribulation. It is claimed that this is impossible, because Christians must through much tribulation enter the kingdom. This is true in regard to all Christians, but this does not prove that all Christians living at the approach of the Second Advent must go through the great tribulation as it will develop in the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy and in Palestine. We remember what is written in Lk. 21. 20–23. Christ told His disciples to flee from Jerusalem and not enter therein. The same warning Christ gives Christians of the last days, when the abomination of desolation is set up in Jerusalem during the persecutions by the two beasts. Compare Mt. 24. 15–22. Circumstances may be such that exposure will not serve the Christian cause. There is also a reward to faithful Christians living at that time who shall escape the great trial. And as we see in Lk. 21, the disciples are told to make supplications to escape. Nevertheless there will be much suffering in those days all over on earth. There is also another circumstantial evidence which may be a proof, namely, that Christ may come unexpectedly as we read in Mt. 24. 37–39: "And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man." Read also the context. At that time it will happen that persons are together, and suddenly one is taken and one left. There are Bible verses which speak of a coming of the Lord without outstanding signs, and other verses that point out some clear signs which are a warning. An admonition is therefore given in Mt. 24. 44: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." The Second Advent just as the First Advent consists of different advents, and still it is only one. In the First Advent we have the advent of the birth of Christ, His coming as prophet at His baptism by John, His coming at His entrance in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and His coming at His resurrection. The Second Coming has two main divisions: His coming *for* the saints in connection with the first resurrection, transformation and translation in the last days, and His coming *with* the saints. There are general signs which precede the first phase of the Second Coming, and these signs are of such a nature that we should always watch and be prepared. Then there are the signs which refer to the second stage of the Advent. To these belong such outstanding signs as the climax of the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy, the abomination of desolation and connected events. To those living at the appearance of the outstanding signs, the first resurrection and the catching away of raised and living saints will be an immediate sign of the nearness of the Second Coming, because the saints translated are caught up to meet the Lord in the higher regions. Considering all these circumstances, the transactions in the 4th and 5th chapters may probably be the result of the first stage in the Second Advent.

In regard to the second question, whether there will be more than one such raising, transformation and translation or not in the Advent period, the book of Revelation speaks of more than one. As this book gives details of the outlines of prophecy in the gospels and epistles, not to speak of O. T. prophecies, we cannot escape the conclusion that there is more than one. Otherwise there would be a marked contradiction in the book of Revelation concerning this matter. The proofs are the following clear passages: The great multitude out of the great tribulation, ch. 7; the two witnesses, ch. 11; the 144,000 on the heavenly mount Zion, ch. 14; the harvest, ch. 14. 14–16; the remnant of the saints who survived the great trial, Rev. 20. 4. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

We should now describe the meaning of the seventh chapter concerning which it has before been explained that this chapter is a parenthetical vision or inset. The framework and the thread of the Revelation story continue. But why does the description of the sealing of the 144,000 occur just here and also the vision of the great multitude out of the great tribulation? It must stand in some connection with the sixth seal. But do not forget that the sixth seal continues and overlaps into the seventh seal, and nevertheless it is described before the seventh seal is opened. Notice also that the great tribulation in its first stage had begun during the preceding seals, which we can understand from the fifth seal, because the souls under the altar had been slain for the Word of God and for their testimony, and they were told that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow servants should be killed even as they were after fulfilling their course. God would judge the enemies and persecutors in due time. With the seventh seal would come the judgment trumpets and the wrath of God with the vials. It is not stated when these martyr souls would be raised, but they would come in their order.

It is also evident that the 144,000 were sealed before the first four trumpets, as the angels who were to sound these trumpets were told that they should not hurt the earth, sea, and trees till the servants of God had been sealed. When we read of the sealing of so many Jews and Israelites, it is clear that the beginning of a new period in the history of the chosen race had started. But it does not necessarily mean that these 144,000 sealed are living in Palestine at the time of sealing. Many Jews have settled in Palestine already in our day, and outnumber those who returned from the Babylonian exile, but the Roman exile has not ended. The Jews are still in the Roman captivity. The Christian protectorate of Palestine has not ended the Times of the Gentiles, but the expulsion of the Turks from the rule in Palestine and the present mandate of England after the great war is an outstanding sign for the hope that the restoration promised is approaching. Many are the prophecies which clearly foretell that the chosen race will again occupy their old country, and although not all will return, this race will have a national home. Compare Am. 9. 15: "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God." This verse cannot refer to the spiritual Israel, because the Church has never lived in Palestine in the sense that a nation lives in a country.

The persons sealed are Jews and Israelites who have recognized Jehovah as their Messiah. The number is not mathematically exact, because that would imply determinism or unconditional predestination. The number is symbolical and means a great complete number: 12 is a complete number, and this multiplied in thousands would signify the complete remnant in the last days. This remnant will be the representatives of all the tribes that will bear testimony in regard to the fact that Jesus is the Christ. There are twelve tribes, but in this case the names differ in the enumeration. The names of Dan and

Ephraim do not occur, but they are substituted by Levi and Joseph. Some claim that the meaning of the Hebrew names is the cause of the substitutions, because Dan means judging and Ephraim signifies increase by multiplication, but the former would never be judges and the number of the latter is settled and could not be multiplied. It is best to accept the names as they are written, and not guess. Those sealed are not the whole number saved among the chosen race, but a particular class of the remnant living at the time. Although they would be living under several of the trumpets, they would not suffer from the plagues. We find them living under the fifth trumpet among the men upon whom the plagues fell. The angels executing the plagues seeing the seal of God on their foreheads would pass by them as sealed. Those sealed were special witnesses of God during these days of judgment, warning especially their own countrymen in regard to the importance of recognizing Jesus as their Messiah.

John sees another and great multitude from all nations. Before this he had seen the elders and the living beings around the throne. From the higher regions he had witnessed the sealing of the 144,000 on earth. He was puzzled when he saw the great multitude coming and standing before the throne. One of the elders asked him: "Who are they?" And John answered: "My Lord, thou knowest." John was then told that this multitude in white robes had come out of the great tribulation. This multitude had not passed through the full tribulation, but had been in it and had come out of it. The great tribulation had more than one trumpet blast. There was a great tribulation before the signs in the sun and other heavenly bodies. But other blasts follow during the trumpets and vials, and they constitute the great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be. It is stated in Mt. 24. 30 that when the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven, then shall the tribes of earth mourn. We must not forget that the wrath of the Lamb belongs to the vials. By God's mercy the severest part of the great tribulation lasts only three and a half years, and the vials are poured only on the adherents of the two beasts. Mark's expression, "after *that* tribulation," comes before the great signs in the sun, etc. Mk. 13. 24. Other blasts would follow therefore. John says that the great multitude of palm bearers could not be counted. He made use of hyperbole when he saw the great throng which he could not number. Compare Jn. 21. 25. It is not stated in the text whether the great multitude had been slain as were the souls under the altar, and therefore would also be disembodied souls, or if they had been raised and translated. Nor is it stated that they while living had been changed and caught up to heaven. It is held that no resurrections occur between the fifth and seventh seals. But it is certain that they had come out of the great tribulation and stood before the throne praising God, and that their sufferings were ended.

12. *THE TWELFTH BEACON LIGHT*
and Prophetical Marks.

With the eighth chapter begins the opening of the seventh seal, although the content of the sixth seal overlaps into the seventh. With this seventh seal a momentous period begins, and therefore there is a silence for about half an hour. It is a mysterious silence of expectancy, because this seal ushers in the approaching consummation when the mystery of God will be fulfilled. The seventh seal contains the seven trumpets and the seven vials. The seven angels who stand in the presence of God receive the trumpets of judgments. But another great angel appears at the altar, having a golden censer. He is evidently the Jehovah-angel, our Lord and High Priest, and all the prayers of the saints are through Him presented to God, because He is our Mediator. These prayers may in this case especially be the prayers referring to the consummation. These prayers were answered in the acts leading to practical redemption. In the act of regaining the world, judgments are necessary. The Jehovah-angel filled the censer out of the fire of the altar and cast it on the earth, and so began the initiation of the judgment fires of the trumpets.

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood on the earth. One-third of the earth was burned, the third of the trees was burned and the grass was burned. Only to show the difference of interpretation between the Historical school and the historical Futurist school, we will simply mention that the Historical school claims that the first trumpet depicts the attack of Alaric on the Roman empire. A close study by comparison will prove that such an interpretation cannot be correct. It is best to use the grammatical method of explanation and find out if the text shall be taken to mean what is written or is figurative. The figurative interpretation only causes confusion. The plagues of Egypt were literal. These plagues will according to the Word of God be repeated on a larger scale. When the Lord undertakes to redeem the world from the modern Pharaoh, He will again inflict the plagues of Egypt. There will be a tremendous tempest of hailstones, lightnings, and bloody tornadoes. "Earth" may in this place only refer to the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy or the empire of the political Antichrist. The word "third" is to be taken in a general sense. The second trumpet means, according to the Historical school of prophecy, the attack on the Roman empire by Genseric and the Vandals. But we must hold to a more literal sense. When the second sounded, "as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea." Therefore it was not an ordinary mountain, but a tremendously large meteoric mass which fell probably into the Mediterranean sea and the effect from the killing of fishes, animals, and men was that the sea became red as blood. We must remember that during the wars of the political Antichrist the sea would be crowded with steamers, ships, warships, submarines, and bombs would be hurled from airplaines of tremendous size. Think of the destruction of ships by warfare and then by the fiery mass of the meteoric mountain from the sky.—When the third trumpet is sounded, there will fall from the sky a great star, burning as a torch, upon the third of the rivers and upon the springs of the waters. The star is called Wormwood, and as the third of the waters were turned into wormwood, many persons died from drinking the waters. The Historical school says that the star is Attila. But the safe interpretation is reached by following the grammatical method. When we read of stars in the first chapter, we find explained that the stars are the seven angels of the churches. But here there is no intimation that the star is a symbol. It is not an ordinary star, for it looks like a torch. It is evidently a comet sweeping along and poisoning the rivers and waters. Then the world will experience a collision with a comet.—When the fourth angel sounded his trumpet, the third part of the sun, moon and stars were smitten by darkness. The Historical school says that this means Odoacer in his attack on Rome. But there is no reason for a symbolical interpretation. Only the literal meaning can be correct. It will be an awful sight when one-third of the sun is dark in the day time and one-third of the moon in the night; and it will be an extraordinary experience to see one-third of the stars on an otherwise clear night obscured. The three trumpets that follow are called woe trumpets. A special proclamation precedes the sounding of these. John saw an eagle flying in mid-heaven. The eagle is here a figurative expression. Compare the living beings in chapter 4. 7. In case the reading in Codex Sinaiticus is correct, the eagle is one of the saints in heaven belonging to the eagle group of saints participating in the judgment scenes. He announces the woe trumpets.

Two of the woe trumpets are described in chapter 9. When the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, John saw a star fall from the sky. From the description of the star it is self-evident that it is a personal being. To this being is given the key to the well-pit of the abyss. When the abyss was opened there came out smoke as the smoke from a great furnace. And from the smoke came out locusts which had the power of scorpions, and they were commanded not to hurt the grass, nor anything green, nor any tree, but only the men who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads. They should not kill them, but torment them five months. The pain was like being hurt by scorpions. Notice their description in the text. The army of these horrible creatures had as king over them the angel of the abyss whose name was Apollyon. The Historical school claims that this army was the Saracenic invasion. But the Saracens or Mohammedans hurt and killed the Christians. Neither is here meant ordinary locusts, because they hurt grass and trees. The grammatical exegesis is the only acceptable. The star fallen out of heaven upon the earth is not an ordinary star, nor is it a meteor, which evidently could not receive a key to open a door. It is plainly an intelligent being, yes, the fallen star which otherwise is called the devil. He opens the abyss to let out the infernal army whose commanding general is Apollyon. Satan has many officers under his command. The demons called infernal locusts torment their victims during five months. The sufferers desire to die, but they cannot. The medical men cannot relieve their pain. Only those who have the seal of God like the 144,000 are exempt from this suffering.

With the sixth trumpet begins the second woe. Before we describe the second woe trumpet as we who follow the historical Futurist sense interpret, we will call attention to the explanation of the Historical school. According to this school of exegesis the sixth trumpet describes the attack and rule of the Turks. Each day means a year. Therefore one year means 360 or 365 years, a month 30 years and one day a year, which should mean the time of the ascendancy of the Turks until the capture of Constantinople, and counting from 1453 and adding 391 years the year 1844 would be reached, which was the beginning of the downfall of the Turkish empire. It is true that the Turks have lost a great deal of their power in our day, and they do not rule in Palestine over which England has the mandate, but the Mohammedans outnumber the Jews and Christians in the land which was the home of the chosen race.—In order to understand the meaning of the sixth trumpet or the second woe we must follow the grammatical sense. When the sixth angel sounded, there was heard a voice from the golden altar commanding to loose the angels who were bound for a certain time at the river Euphrates. These angels were evil angels who were to command a great infernal army during the second woe. Why were they bound at the river Euphrates? Because in this region the evil powers led by Satan made their first attempt against the human race. Around this locality the greatest enemies of Israel resided. Babylon supplanted Eden and the confusion of tongues began at Euphrates on account of the pride of the human race in attempting to build the tower of Babel. At the time of the second woe the devil will have more power than ever before. He will do his utmost against Christianity. Even in the time in which we live Spiritism has become a great power. We live in the "perilous times," in the approach of the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy. When the second woe is at hand, the Confederacy is already formed and the political Antichrist is ruling and soon appears as the Beast. Then the political Antichrist becomes the Man of sin and is possessed. It is a time of demon worship. When the four evil angels are freed from their restraint, the infernal cavalry overruns the earth. Their number is vast, namely, two hundred millions. Read in the text the description of the infernal horses. One-third of the men among the adherents of Antichrist are slain by fire, smoke and sulphur. The length of time of the plagues is said to be one year, one month, one day and one hour. John saw these things from the higher regions, but we are not told whether men on earth saw these infernal creatures. But the effect of the visitation was such that it was felt and seen. Think of the last great war and its suffering! But people forget and, worse still, they do not repent, but continue in demon worship, idolatry, sorceries, murders, thefts and fornication. The after effects are also terrible. Our time has some traits of increasing wickedness. Spiritualism appeals to persons who do not hold fast to the clear Word of God, sorcery is used, demon worship is more prevalent than ever, and sins against the sixth commandment remind of Sodom and heathendom. The marriage bond is easily broken. As a consequence fornication in its different forms undermines society. The social conditions of our day prepare the way for the antichristianity of the last days.

The sixth trumpet continues and its woes will be succeeded by the wrath of God during the vials of the seventh trumpet. But during the close of the sixth trumpet we are witnesses of events which throw sidelights on the general pictures of those days. They may be called parenthetic insets. These insets, both as transacted in the sky and on earth, make the principal thread of the prophecy more distinct and clear. We therefore should pay special attention to the 10th chapter and to ch. 11. 1–14. Verses 1–2 of ch. 11 should belong to the 10th chapter.

The vision in the 10th chapter anticipates the end and lights up the closing scenes. The following chapters give us more detailed descriptions of conditions which are the background of the events especially during the seventh trumpet.

The mighty angel in the 10th chapter is evidently Christ. He has the rainbow, not *a* rainbow, on His head, which, according to chapter 4, shows that He is not a created angel. And His face shone as a sun, which identifies Him with the appearance in chapter 1. He had an open little book or roll in His hand. Compare ch. 5. It is stated in ch. 10. 3 that when He cried with a roaring voice, "the seven thunders uttered their voices." John heard what they uttered and intended to write what they said, but a voice from heaven forbade him and said: "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not." The command was absolute. As John obeyed and never revealed it, we should not attempt to speculate or guess. It will not be known until the day of fulfilment. If the Historical school of prophecy were correct in its interpretation, we would know what these thunders uttered, and there would be no need of speculation in such a case. According to the Historical school this part of prophecy has been fulfilled. This is a proof that the interpretation of the Historical school of prophecy is incorrect.

In regard to the book, which was opened, it is clearly the same as we read about in ch. 5. Christ takes possession of the property which was lost and which He redeemed. Symbolically He takes possession by putting His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the land. We refer to the words in Dt. 11. 24: "Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours." When the practical redemption takes place, the time is near for the finishing of the mystery of God. In verse 6 we read: "There shall be time no longer." The Historical school claims that a time means 360 or 365 years. This school of prophecy says that the 10th chapter depicts the Reformation. Therefore this school counts 360 or 365 years from some important event in the Reformation era and at their conclusion the mystery of God shall be finished. But these periods have ended and no outstanding event has been reached. It is therefore best to follow the historical Futurist mode of interpretation. A time is a year, but the exact beginning of the time is not given. We find, though, that in the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God shall be fulfilled, even as He preached these glad tidings to His servants the prophets. Notice the expression "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God." It is not singular *in the day,* but plural *in the days.* Even of there has been a seeming delay, the time (chronos) of the seventh trumpet shall be the time when the mystery of God shall be solved. Then the great mystery of the Church in her mission during the bodily absence of her Lord will be understood. This mission occupies the unreckoned time between the ascension of Christ and His return. The Church has preached and continues to preach the Gospel of salvation and all that it implies, the mystery of incarnation, reconciliation, satisfaction, and atonement which even the angels desire to look into. It is the unknown time between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel's 9th chapter; but the time of the practical redemption is approaching. The Christian hope will in the right time be realized. The latter part of chapter 10 presents under the figure of the title deed or the opened roll, which was to be eaten by John, one act in the taking possession of the property redeemed. John is the representative of all the children of God who as fellow heirs with Jesus Christ will inherit the redeemed property. But the practical taking possession meant many bitter experiences. In the figurative language it is stated that the roll was delicious to the taste and bitter in the belly. The transactions during the seventh trumpet bear out this hard experience. The prince of darkness or Satan with his servants, led by the two beasts, will fight to the end against the kingdom of Christ, as we shall learn in the following chapters.

Chapter 11, verses 1 and 2, describes in figurative language the taking possession of the property, but before the appropriation comes the measuring. The first measuring, which was performed by John, covered the temple, the altar, and the worshipers in the temple. It could not refer to the Church, because the Church belongs to Christ and His people. It refers to the property which had not up to that time been acknowledged as belonging to Christ. The description is plainly Jewish. The temple, the altar, and the court of the Gentiles plainly depict Jewish conditions. And the location, when the great city is spoken of, clearly demonstrates that Jerusalem is meant. The city is also called the Holy City. The taking possession must begin in Jerusalem and the restoration will begin there and extend to the whole world, just as the Gospel preaching and the Church began there. The taking possession implies judgments to oust the prince of darkness. The expulsion of the Turks from Palestine as a result of the last great war was a preliminary judgment to prepare the way for the close of the Times of the Gentiles. Toward the close of the sixth trumpet and at the beginning of the seventh, great uneasiness and fear is felt in Palestine. When John was told to measure the temple, altar, and those who worship there, but leave out the court outside, it is stated that this outside court was given to the nations, and that they should tread under foot the Holy City 42 months. Before this, according to Daniel, the Beast of Rev. 13. 1–10 has appeared in his first stage before becoming the full-fledged beast. He had overcome three kingdoms and seemed to control the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy. In his great power he made a covenant with many Jews to assist them to regain Palestine and begin rebuilding the temple. The immigration of Jews into Palestine had in the meantime increased and the altar was built. On this altar offerings take place before the complete building of the Jewish temple. It is not necessary that the entire temple is built to fulfill the prophecy of 2 Th. 2. 4: "that he sitteth in the temple of God." How the Mosque of Omar shall be removed, and how the Mohammedans shall be reconciled to it, this problem will easily be solved by the head of the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy, either by his hypnotic persuasive influence or by force. Modern means of warfare can remove the Mosque quickly and modern ways of building can restore so much of the holy place as is necessary for the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel and Mt. 24. 15: that the abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place. It is not stated that the temple is rebuilt. But it will perhaps be fully rebuilt later when Palestine is restored and the real return of the Jews has been accomplished. The measuring of the temple at the time described in Rev. 11. 1, 2 does not mean that the Jewish temple was completely rebuilt. It is a measuring in the sense of planning as when an architect is drawing plans; and it may not be a plan according to the old Jewish idea, because John would not plan to restore the old Levitical temple service with its sacrifices of animals. The antitypal fulfilment of Christ as the Lamb of God precludes the idea that John should plan for a Jewish temple of sacrifices. At the time of Rev. 11 before the seventh trumpet there was a Jewish remnant still on earth which remnant was sealed. If the great mass of Jews should favor a temple of the old order, it is unlikely that the 144,000 would. The measuring refers to the new order of things to follow the seventh trumpet after the events described in Rev. 19. Until that time of glorious victory for Christ and His saints the Gentiles continue to trample the Holy City, and the worst trampling will occur during the 42 months of the Beasts.

In verse 3 of chapter 11 begins the description of the two witnesses. This description, although found in the visions of John, is not a vision. It is a prophecy or account by Christ in His own words. We should notice this fact in reading this wonderful and extraordinary narrative. The two witnesses are extraordinary men, and they are outstanding witnesses against the Beast. At a most dangerous time, when the satanic trinity is ready to appear and the stage is set for the greatest battle against Christ and His kingdom, the two witnesses fearlessly cope with the Beast, described in the 13th chapter. The two witnesses are more formidable against the Beast or Antichrist than all other opponents together. An attentive reader will never doubt that these witnesses are persons. All guesses that they are bodies of men or systems fail, when we read the statements of the narrative which are plain descriptions of two personal witnesses, how they appeared, how they preached, how they performed miracles, how they died, how they were raised from death and ascended. The people of the time when the history of these witnesses is concretely transacted, see them, hear them, fear them, and the Beast or Antichrist wars against them. The city, where these witnesses testified, is described or called the great City, where their Lord was crucified. This statement settles the fact that the great City in this case is Jerusalem. It is a historical fact that Christ was crucified in Jerusalem. The extraordinary witnesses were two. The Lord has two witnesses and Satan has two antichristian witnesses, the two Beasts of chapter 13. Before other important events the Lord has sent His witnesses, as Enoch and Noah, Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elishah, Ezekiel and Daniel, the two olive trees and candlesticks which were in the time of Zechariah, Joshua, and Zerubbabel, Simeon and John the Baptist. Joshua and Zerubbabel or the two olive trees were types of the antitypes which were the two witnesses of chapter 11 in the book of Revelation. Read verses 3 and 4. In verse 4 it is plainly stated: "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth." The types are persons, therefore the antitypes are persons. The interesting question has been and continues to be: Who are the two witnesses? Many of the church fathers held the view that the two witnesses will be Enoch and Elijah. They base their view principally on Mal. 4. 5. The Septuagint, Arabic, and old Latin versions read Elijah the Tishbite. The fathers also refer to Ecclesiasticus 48. 1–11. If Christ had not spoken of John the Baptist as "Elijah which is to come," the statement in Mal. 4. 5 would have settled the view that Elijah should come in connection with the Second Advent of Christ. Compare Mt. 11. 14 and 17. 3–13. When Jesus came down from the mountain with the three disciples, they asked Him: "Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not." John the Baptist was the Elijah in spirit and power at the First Advent of Christ. Compare Lk. 1. 17, where the angel says to Zacharias that John shall go before Christ "in the spirit and power of Elijah." John said himself that he was not Elijah in person. If

John was the Elijah in spirit and power, the two witnesses may be Enoch and Elijah in spirit and power. In case Enoch and Elijah shall return and be the two witnesses, they must have been supernaturally preserved in their natural bodies of flesh. Otherwise they could not have died. If they were translated living and their bodies changed into glorified bodies, they could not then have been slain. When Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, he appeared in glory. If Elijah is to come again in person, he must have natural flesh supernaturally preserved in case he is one of the witnesses. But if he is not one of the two witnesses, he could come in his glorified state as he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. This would not hinder him from coming and being active in the times of restoration of all things. When Christ spoke of Elijah, who just had been seen by the three disciples on the mountain, He said: "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not." The word "cometh" is present or is coming, but in Greek composition the present tense may emphasize the certainty of the future and represent the thing in view as already commenced. When Christ says that Elijah is coming and shall restore all things, and refers to John the Baptist as in a sense Elijah, He does not contradict Mal. 4. 5, 6.

The two witnesses may be Enoch and Elijah in the same way as John the Baptist was Elijah. And Elijah may come in person, but in his glorified pneumatic body, although not specially mentioned, for all the Words of God must be fulfilled.

The two witnesses are called by Christ "my two witnesses" in those times of judgment when Christ returns as judge. They have the power of Elijah and are able to punish their enemies by fire. They are able to shut the sky that no rain comes during their time of witnessing, they have power to turn waters into blood, and they have power to smite the earth with plagues. Their time of prophecy shall continue 1260 days. When they have finished their testimony the political Antichrist or the first Beast, possessed by the devil, shall fight against them and kill them. Their dead bodies shall lie in the street in the city of Jerusalem and their enemies will not allow them to be placed in a tomb. And from among the peoples, tribes, and nations, whether living in Palestine or visitors in Jerusalem, many will go and look upon their dead bodies for three days and a half. Messages will be transmitted to all papers in the world relating to the events in Jerusalem. All who are adherents of the Beast will make merry in their joy over the death of the two witnesses. But their joy is short. After the three days and a half the two witnesses were raised by God and they stood upon their feet. "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud." Then there was a great earthquake and the tenth part of the city fell. In this earthquake seven thousand persons are killed. In the 14th verse of ch. 11 we read: "The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly." The wonderful work of the two witnesses ends with the second woe or the sixth trumpet. As their witnessing lasted three and a half years, it began so far back from the time of their resurrection and ascension. The political Antichrist could not hinder the two witnesses in the first stage of his rising power, but when the ten horns unitedly and of one mind give him their power (ch. 17. 12, 13, 17), then he enters upon his second stage of authority as world emperor and the ten horns are henceforth kings in his empire. He then becomes the Beast that cometh up out of the abyss, being possessed of infernal power, yea, by the devil. In the beginning as a little horn and while he conquers three kingdoms, he is very friendly to many of the Jews and makes a covenant of seven years. He is then looked upon as the world genius and the great coming man. During this time the two witnesses appear and become the fulfilment of the vision of Zechariah chapter 4 in regard to the two olive trees and the two candlesticks. Through them God pours forth His mighty power and the spiritual oil feeds the candlesticks so as to shine clear as beacon lights in those perilous times. The two witnesses will warn the people against the antichrists. Their text will be the book of Revelation and other prophecies. It is a final warning before the wrath of God shall be poured out during the third Woe or Seventh trumpet. The seven bowls are the last plagues and will be poured on the adherents of the Antichrist.

13. *THE THIRTEENTH BEACON LIGHT and Prophetical Marks.*

With chapter 11, verse 15, begins the description of the Third Woe or the Seventh trumpet. The concluding verses in chapter eleven contain a very brief synopsis or rehearsal of some leading events which will be given in more or less detail in the following chapters. It is a solemn and awe-inspiring introduction. We should also remember ch. 10. 7: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets." When the seventh angel sounded, there followed great voices in heaven saying: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." Read the following verses! When it is stated that the time to judge the dead is come, it does not mean that the scene about the white throne is to be enacted at the beginning of the trumpet, because it is a general synopsis, but everything will happen in correct order as stated in detail. Most of the context describes the judgment of the living. It is a judgment of the dead when they do not belong to the first resurrection.

The last verse in the 11th chapter relates how John saw the temple in heaven and the ark of the covenant. There is a temple and service in heaven. The ark of the Jewish covenant is lost and may never be found, but the pattern from which it was copied is seen in heaven. When John sees the heavenly vision, the people on earth see and hear lightnings and thunders, and there is an earthquake and great hail.

In the description of the Seventh trumpet there are several parenthetical visions or insets, but they all belong to the seventh trumpet. The seven vials are the framework of the seventh trumpet or the third Woe, or, to use the other figure, the seven vials continue the story thread. Do not forget that there are seven seals, that from the sixth and seventh seals proceed seven trumpets and that the seventh trumpet consists of seven vials. The seventh seal continues therefore throughout, because the seventh seal consists of seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet consists of seven vials.

The 12th chapter contains side visions or parenthetical presentations which throw light on and fill out the main story. Two signs are seen in the sky. The signs must be interpreted as signs or figures, but they stand for realities. The woman is especially that part of the visible Church which at the time of fulfilment exists in Palestine and preëminently the Jewish Christian Church. We must not forget the 144 thousand sealed from the tribes of Israel and what is meant by the "remnant" according to Rom. 11. The Gentile Christians living in Palestine and the Jewish Christians will in those days of tribulation be as one, being by faith in Christ the sons and daughters of Abraham. But the visible Church will then as now be a mixture of nominal and true Christians. Some interpreters claim that there is no church on earth at the time depicted in Rev. 12, but a careful reading of the book of Revelation proves that there is an external church in several places. Outside of the revived Roman empire or the main empire of the Beast and on the fields of the Christian Foreign Missions the visible Church may still be not entirely disorganized. We must also notice what is stated in this the 12th chapter which we now study. We read in verse 14 that the woman was transferred into the wilderness, where she would be nourished for a time, times, and half a time. And pay attention to verse 17: "And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." This proves that at the time depicted there were true followers of Jesus.

In the figurative language the woman is said to be arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and that she was with child, travailing in birth and in pain to be delivered. The woman or the Church, whether in Palestine or in other parts of the earth, whether Jewish Christian or Gentile Christian, is the great light bearer and her members are arrayed with "the Sun of Righteousness." She is victorious in her position, having "the moon under her feet." To tread the moon under foot symbolizes in the figure to be victorious over the kingdom of darkness. As the sun in the figure means the kingdom of light, the moon means the kingdom of darkness, the moon having no light in itself. The crown of twelve stars, whether the number is taken from the twelve tribes of Israel or from the twelve apostles, signifies the royal priesthood in the function of teaching through the pastors. In this respect ch. 1. 20 is a true parallel, the angels or pastors of the Church are called the stars.

The woman or Church is in travail to bring forth. It is her work to be the means of getting and bearing the children of God. But in this chapter it does not refer to this function. It concerns another begetting, namely, the resurrection from the dead, which is called the great regeneration. Compare Mt. 19. 28. To be raised from the dead means a begetting into the kingdom of glory. The children of God are the children of resurrection. The dragon or Satan tries his utmost to hinder that men are regenerated, and in the last days he will try to hinder the resurrection from the dead.

With the third verse another sign is depicted. John sees a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon the heads seven diadems. The seven heads are the seven world kingdoms, succeeding one another from Egypt, and concluding with the ten horns or the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy over which the Beast will rule by the influence of the dragon or Satan. The dragon with his tail draws the third part of the stars of heaven and casts them to the earth. These stars are the fallen angels. We do not need to speculate as to the number of angels who fell with their leader, whether one-third of all the angels or in round numbers.

In the fifth verse it is stated that the woman was delivered of a son, a man child. The expression in Greek is in the neuter gender, and means, therefore, either male or female. If the reference had been to Christ exclusively, another word in the masculine gender would have been used. Besides, the woman here is not Mary, the virgin mother of Christ. Furthermore, the Church is not the mother of Christ. If the Church is called the body of Christ, and if in another figure the true Church is to be the bride of Christ, she could not be the mother of Christ. What has led some commentators to believe that Christ is the so-called man child, depends on the following reasons: Satan sought to destroy Christ at His birth, Christ was caught up to the throne of God at His ascension, and prophecy says that He shall rule with a rod of iron. But we must consider that Christ was not caught up to the throne of God immediately at His birth. Christ has not yet begun His rule with an iron rod. This rule belongs to the judgment period. The birth of the "man child" is not consummated before the Second Advent period. Prophecy looks forward and not backward. The book of Revelation is a prophetical book written in the last part of the first century. It treats not of the First Advent, but of the Second. The birth of the "man child" cannot mean the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, but refers to another birth in the future. The book of Revelation is the climax and there is a historical background in the First Advent and ensuing events, but the fulfilment of chapter 12 belongs to the future. In using parallels we must seek to find the true ones. Christ will rule with a rod of iron according to prophecy, but "the man child" will rule with Him. Christ writes in one of His letters: "Hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father." Who then is the "man child"? In the 12th chapter it refers to the Jewish Christian Church in the strict sense, or the saints. The manifestation of these whether by resurrection or, if living, by change is the birth to the heavenly life in the land of the living, and they are caught up to the Lord in the sky and enter into the kingdom of Glory. There they will rule with Christ. If in this chapter the reference is especially to the true Jewish Christians in Palestine, all Gentile true Christians will have the same experience. We remember the great multitude from all Gentile nations caught up as recorded in the 7th chapter. In Col. 3. 4 we read: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." If the woman represents the visible Church, whether in Palestine or other countries, the invisible or true Church becomes manifest in the resurrection and change during the Second Advent. The 144,000 sealed according to chapter seven were on earth up to the seventh trumpet, but in chapter 14 we find them translated.

They therefore evidently belong to the so-called "man child," whether male or female.

In the sixth verse we are informed that the woman fled into the wilderness, perhaps toward Sinai. She received supernatural help to reach a place prepared for her. The woman or the visible Church in Palestine was also by God's providence nourished in the wilderness just as Israel of old after the flight from Egypt. In this period of sojourn in the desert the time is limited to 1260 days, or three and a half years. This flight into the desert and the mountains should also be studied in the light of Mt. 24. 15–22. In these verses warning is given to disciples living in Judaea, when the abomination of desolation is standing on the holy place, advising them to flee to the mountains. The same admonition is given to the disciples when they shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies at the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. Then the disciples fled to Pella. Compare Lk. 21. 20–24. What is related in Luke was typical of what will occur in the last days.

In connection with these events in Palestine during the Second Advent period there is a war in the sky between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels. This war is therefore future, although there is a constant warfare between Satan and his angels and Michael and his angels. But the time will come when Satan will be expelled from the sky heaven and will be cast down on earth. At present the aerial regions are lurking places of evil spirits, and Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. Paul says that we as Christians wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavens. Compare Eph. 2. 2; 6. 11, 12. The object of the war in the sky as far as the dragon is concerned related to an attempt to hinder the resurrection, the change of living saints and the translation of both companies. The dragon or Satan will at that time be fully aware of the fact that his power is at stake. He concentrates all his means of resistance. And he even accuses the Christians of being unfit to be honored as children of the resurrection and translation. But he will not prevail. Compare also Dan. 12. 1. Michael and his angels are victorious in this battle in the clouds. Then follows the triumphant announcement by a great voice in heaven: "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night."

In the 13th verse we are informed that the dragon, seeing that he was cast down to earth, persecutes the woman who brought forth the "man child," and sends an army after her, but he failed in his scheme. Just as the Egyptian army in mad pursuit of ancient Israel was drowned in the Red Sea, the armed forces of the red dragon were swallowed by the earth opening like a tremendously huge mouth. Then after persecuting the rest of the seed of the woman, the dragon attempts his greatest scheme to antagonize Christ, namely, to bring forth the Antichrist in personal form, yea, two Beasts. Satan, being a spirit, to accomplish his design, was compelled to possess a human person. The best agent for his purpose was evidently the great man who had made a covenant with many for seven years according to Dan. 9. 27. This man is called the little horn in the book of Daniel. At the time of the events fulfilled according to Rev. 11 and 12, the little horn, or the eleventh horn of Daniel, is no longer insignificant, because he has become the leader in the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy, having first overcome three horns, or rulers over three kingdoms. His plan to revive or restore the former Roman empire was about accomplished. He breaks the covenant with the Jews. As President of the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy he is acclaimed and elected emperor of the Roman world power, and according to Rev. 17. 12 the ten rulers in the confederacy become real kings when the former eleventh horn becomes the emperor of the revived Roman empire, or the Beast, as he is called in chapter thirteen. This is evidently the time when he becomes possessed by Satan and is called the Beast. John, having seen the first Beast, now sees another Beast arise which supports the first one. Whether their relation began before the events depicted in chapters eleven and twelve is not stated. There are therefore more than one antichrist, although *one* is especially called Antichrist. John says in his epistle 1 Jn. 2. 18: "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour." Compare verse 22: "This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son." The expression "hour" means a period and in this case a very long period, just as Paul in his letters to Timothy speaks of later times and in the last days. The author of the epistle to Hebrews in 1. 2 speaks of the end of these days, when God speaks to us through the Son. This is, in fact, the whole New Testament.

It is clear that if there are many antichrists, there is one who will be *the Antichrist*, and it is also settled that the Antichrist denieth the Father and the Son. The Antichrist cannot be a believer in the divine trinity, in the deity of Christ and in the vicarious atonement. John in his book of Revelation speaks of two beasts. But one of them must be *the Antichrist.*

The first inset or side vision throwing light on the events of the seventh trumpet is the two great signs of the 12th chapter, namely, *the woman* and *the dragon.*

The second inset or parenthetical vision is described in chapter 13, namely, THE TWO BEASTS.

These two beasts existed before they were designated as beasts. As to the first, Daniel describes his preliminary development and history. He had not developed into the beast when he makes the seven year covenant with many. When he at last appears, he must have grown up into maturity. But he becomes the Beast when Satan is cast down to earth and conceives the plan to possess this man and actually possesses him. Both are called beasts on account of their hideous appearance and heinous wickedness. The first beast arises from the sea which figuratively signifies the sea of nations, but the actual background is the Mediterranean sea. In the vision John sees a monstrous beast arise from this sea. He sees ten horns come up, then seven heads and finally the monster. The appearance of the beast is like a leopard or panther, the feet as the feet of a bear and the mouth like the mouth of a lion. One of the heads appeared as if it had been smitten, but the death stroke was healed. The monstrous beast symbolized a power having sovereignty of the world. It is a representation of the world power in its consummation. This world power is represented in one great regent who is autocratic. The ten horns in the figure appear first, because this condition of things will obtain at the consummation when the personal expression of the beast will be an emperor and ten kings in the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy. The reason for the appearance of the beast as a leopard or panther becomes clear if we study Daniel in his interpretation of the four empires. The Graeco-Macedonian empire is designated under the figure of a leopard, and it must therefore prove that the Beast or political Antichrist ascended to his power from being a little horn in one of the provinces where the Graeco-Macedonian empire had its headquarters. The historical background is depicted by the bear, the former Medo-Persian power, and by the lion or the former Babylonian power. The seven heads are: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Graeco-Macedonia, Rome and either France or Germany. The smitten head is the old Roman empire, and the healing means that the Roman empire will be revived. When this takes place, the whole world will be astonished. It will be a time of devil worship, as we read in the 4th verse, and also of man worship. We quote the verse: "And they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" When Christ was on earth, Satan took Him into a very high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Christ spurned the offer. But in the last days Satan will find the man who accepts the offer. It is further stated that the Beast will blaspheme God, His tabernacle, and even them that dwell in heaven. He could persecute the Christians on earth and the Jewish people in Palestine and in his empire, but he could only blaspheme those saints who had been translated to meet the Lord in the heavens. It irritated him that a great multitude had come out from the great tribulation, and that the two witnesses, whom he had slain, had been raised from the dead in Jerusalem and translated to heaven, which fact was known to the whole world. This hurt his cause, and the visible translation of the two witnesses was a most convincing evidence against his pretentions. We know from verse 5 that his power as the Beast will last only 42 months. As he probably will not read the book of Revelation, he may not know that his downfall is near at hand. But according to chapter 12. 12 Satan is said to have great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. He will therefore drive the Beast to do his utmost against the kingdom of God. The 42 months of his rule as the Beast will therefore continue the great tribulation which has different phases. But a part of the last great tribulation will be experienced by the adherents of the Beast. The seven vials are poured on the dominion of the beasts. We must keep in mind that during these plagues the adherents of Christ are protected as the Israelites were during the plagues of Egypt. Jacob's trouble belongs to the seventh trumpet or the third Woe and will be intense, especially in Palestine. During the third Woe the satanic trinity shows its greatest power of evil. As we know, this trinity consists of *Satan,* the father of evil, *the first Beast* or the political Antichrist, and *the second Beast* or the religious Antichrist, also called the False Prophet. This trinity will be more or less powerful in all parts of the world and will be worshiped by all or every one "whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." Consider this carefully, and therefore the following admonition is addressed to us: "If any man hath an ear, let him hear." According to the 10th verse the conditions will be so terrible that some in desperation will use the sword against the officers of the Beast; there is no escape for them and they will all be killed; if anyone tries to flee, he will be caught and hardly dealth with. The saints will suffer to the extreme. The verse concludes with the following words: "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

The first Beast is supported by a second described in verses 11–17. Some claim that he is referred to in Ps. 10. 18. The expression may mean that this Beast had his origin in the land of Palestine and that he was of Jewish descent. Some claim that it means that he arose from the underworld and was therefore also inspired by the dragon. But it may also simply mean that as John saw the first Beast arise from the sea, he saw the second come from the land. It has no important bearing in the way of explanation. If the first was brought up from the cosmopolitan sea of nations, the second arose within the revived Roman empire. But in figurative expressions it is not necessary that every part of a figure must mean something. While the first Beast had ten horns, the second had two horns like a lamb. His horns did not therefore represent kingdoms. His appearance was more lamblike, but he spoke as a dragon. He is called the False Prophet, and by the voice of his infernal power he hypnotizes the people of the empire and will evidently control the press, telegraph, telephone and radio in the empire of the Beast, and indirectly by influence and politics the whole world. He will represent the religious side of the government of the Beast, but not the old religions. The old religions will all be antiquated. His religion will be full-grown modernism. His horns will be naturalism and infernal supernaturalism, science of worldly wisdom and spiritism, worship of the Beast and dragon. When it is stated that the second Beast exercises all the authority of the first *in his sight,* it means with his good will and approbation as the prime minister and associate. The second Beast executes the will of the first Beast and the dragon. He compels the inhabitants of the empire to worship the Beast, who had restored the Roman empire. The second Beast or the False Prophet performs miracles, such as causing fire to come from the sky. He causes men to collect contributions to erect a statue or image of the first Beast. And when the statue is built and placed on the holy site, he by infernal power gives breath to it and the image speaks. Everybody is compelled to worship the image. Compare Dan. 3 and the worship of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had erected. Probably small statuettes will be made and pictures taken to which people will be compelled to give homage. According to verse 16 all adherents of the Beast will be given a mark either on their right hand or upon their forehead. Only those who had the mark could buy or sell. The mark according to verse 17 would be either the name of the Beast or the number of his name. The Beast will be the greatest commercial monopolist of the world. A generation accustomed to signs, marks and passes will easily be persuaded to have the mark of Antichrist, since they otherwise cannot buy the necessities of life and are threatened with death if they do not use the mark as directed. But people who will live in those terrible days should read Rev. 14. 9–11. There is no escape from the wrath of God for those who have the mark of Antichrist. The last verse of ch. 13 gives the only clue to the mark of Antichrist, and this key to the mystery can only be used when the personal Antichrist or the Beast has appeared: "Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six." There have been many guesses. Many names and combinations of letters may give the number of 666 in Hebrew, Greek or Latin, and, therefore, it is impossible to give the name of the Beast before he appears. In our Greek New Testament there are three Greek letters to designate the number of his name. These letters would be in our numbering 666. Even if some or many should conjecture that some name like *lateinos* might be his name, it does not solve the problem. Many have claimed that it may mean that he would be a Roman or Italian, but even so, the real name would not be known before he is manifested. Then, when all signs shall point to him, the number of his name 666, whether in Greek or Latin and as a mark on his adherents, will corroborate that he is the Beast or great political Antichrist. According to verse 18 the wisdom will consist in counting the number of the beast, for it is the number of the name of the man, and the number is 666. No interpreter can therefore prophesy what the name will be. It will be known to the wise when he appears with the number and other signs, using his name and the number of it, or either, as a mark of adherence.

The fourteenth chapter is also an inset; the first part being a contrast to the dark and stormy days of the two antichrists, the political and the false religious. We are transferred to heavenly scenes and hear angel messages of a comforting kind. The last part of the chapter contains anticipatory events like the fall of Babylon and judgment scenes. We see the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the one hundred forty-four thousand redeemed having the names of the Father and His Son on their foreheads.

Mount Zion must be a heavenly mountain, for the one in Jerusalem on earth would not have room for the four living beings, the elders, and the one hundred forty-four thousand redeemed who had come from earth. They were singing in the presence of the throne and the sound of their song was mighty, and as harp-singers harping with their harps. As to their character, they were as pure virgins. They are the same as we read about in the seventh chapter, who were sealed from the tribes of Israel. Those sealed were of both genders. Their virginity was not fleshly but spiritual and moral. The description is evidently beyond earthly scenes in its character. And they sing a new song which they only could sing as the first-fruits of Israel. When the fulness of the Gentiles approaches completion in the latter days, then begins the redemption of Israel. Compare Rom. 11, especially the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses. The term first-fruits is also used in reference to the Gentile Christians. Compare Rom. 8. 23; 1 Cor. 15. 20–22; Jas. 1. 18.

After having seen the vision of the 144,000, the first-fruits of Israel transferred from earth to Mount Zion in heaven, just as the first-fruits represented by the elders and living ones had been transferred, angel messages are heard. The first is found in verses six and seven. John sees an angel flying in mid-heaven or the sky. This angel had a message to carry to every nation on earth. It is not stated how it was delivered. But the message was pronounced with a great voice. It was a declaration that what had transpired and what would follow implied that the hour of Judgment had come. The delivery by angelic agency proves that the ordinary office of the ministry was not used. During the awful times of the two Beasts religious services would be more or less interrupted. God will use extraordinary means in the judgment period to arouse the attention of the peoples and warn them that the delayed judgment was about to take place. In those days God will again use angels like of old, and there will be many signs and wonders. The angel message reminds the world in those times of antichristianity that there is a God. The message is a consolation to the God fearing and a warning to unbelievers. Read the majestic message in the 7th verse.

Then follows a second message: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great," announcing in an anticipating way what would soon be accomplished. Babylon and its fall will be fully described in the 17th and 18th chapters. Some hold the view that the old Babylon will be rebuilt in the future and again destroyed, claiming that the former world city was not so fully destroyed as Is. 13. 19–22 foretold, but we must consider that the old city has in fact disappeared, and there is nothing in the prophecy in this respect which has not been fulfilled. And even if a new city should arise, it would not fulfill the statement in Rev. 18. 24: "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth," which proves that the word Babylon as found in the book of Revelation is used in a figurative sense of another city which we will call attention to again.

The third angel message begins in the 9th verse which proclaims the punishment about to fall upon all who worship the Beast or his image and who use his mark. They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God and be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

In the days of the Beast, or the emperor of the restored Roman empire, most worldly-minded people will find no difficulty in using the marks and passwords required by the great Antichrist as they are perhaps accustomed to use signs, marks and passwords, but in those terrible days they may be put to death, if they do not worship the Beast, or great political Antichrist, and the false Prophet. The Jews in Palestine will be deceived on account of his friendliness to them at first and on account of the covenant he makes, by which they are led to hope that he is their Messiah, and the Arabs will believe he is their prophetical Redeemer. The Arabs and Jews may for a short time be united in the same hope. But though it is difficult to grasp how the Jews will regain their national former home, the Lord will in due and proper time fulfill all promises.

During the time of the last antichristianity the saints will have their faith tested and their patience will be manifested. The twelfth verse calls attention to this, and the thirteenth pronounces them blessed who die as true believers in the time of the great tribulation and before the last phase of it. This verse is true in regard to all the children of God as to their departure from this life, but the verse makes a distinction by the words "from henceforth" on account of the sufferings during the years of the two Beasts.

In the 14th verse a white cloud appears and upon it sat a person who was like "a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Then another angel came out from the temple in heaven, crying with a great voice to him who sat on the cloud to reap with the sickle for the harvest of the earth is overripe. As the one sitting on the cloud is the Lord, the created angel could not command the Son of God. It is not a commission from the Father, as this had evidently been given before, but a prayer of urgency to the great Harvester that He should wield the sickle and reap. We read in the 16th verse the tremendous words: "And the earth was reaped." Some have held that this harvest in the latter days is the gathering home of the children of God living on earth at that time. Others have held that the harvest is the ingathering of the Jews, as the 144,000 are the first-fruits of the calling of Israel. But we should notice that the text only says that the *earth* was reaped. It is true that in the Gospels harvest and what belongs to it is used in regard to the ingathering of the children of God as we read in Matthew 13. 30: "In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." Compare Lk. 3. 17. In the 15th verse of Rev. 14 no details are given. But this verse must be read in the light of Joel 3. 13: "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great." There is therefore also a harvest of judgment. The judgment here described is a part of the judgment of the living at the Second Advent. Read Joel 3. 11–15; Mt. 25. 31–46. The expression *sharp sickle* also shows it is a judgment act. The harvest, when the earth is reaped, covers the whole earth of living men, although the reaping and its consequences are not fully explained, but in its execution the vintage is limited to the near East and especially Palestine, although armies are represented from the whole earth. When we read in the 17th verse of another angel, it is the same Lord described in the 14th verse. The clusters of the vine of earth are Antichrist, his armies and close adherents, and these clusters are gathered into the wine press of the wrath of God. This wine press without figurative expressions is the battlefield of Armageddon, but the great army will stretch from Megiddo to Bozrah also surrounding Jerusalem, a distance of 1600 furlongs. To think of a river of human and animal blood about 160 miles in length is an awful thought! Read in this connection Is. 63. 1–4. These verses have been misinterpreted to refer to the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane and on Calvary, but this prophecy does not refer to the vicarious atonement. It is a scene in the final practical redemption during the Second Advent. The fulfilment will take place on the battlefield just mentioned. It is the day of vengeance when the Redeemer will tread down His enemies in His judgment anger. When this battle has been won, the year of redemption is near for the children of God. When we consider the outcome of this battle in Palestine, we can understand that the first angel message began with the announcement of an eternal Gospel referring to the result of the practical redemption.

The judgment of the living in the so-called harvest and vintage does not take place before the outpouring of the vials or bowls of wrath. It is an anticipatory or introductory description of the judgment described in chapters 16, 18 and 19.

14. *THE FOURTEENTH BEACON LIGHT and Prophetical Marks.*

The outstanding divisions of the Seventh Trumpet are the Seven Vials or Bowls of wrath.

When according to chapter 11 the Seventh Trumpet is sounded, the Elders cry (v. 18): "Thy wrath came." In chapter 15. 1 we read: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God."

Then follows a beautiful scene, the glassy sea mingled with fire, and those victorious from the Beast standing by the sea. They have harps and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Compare Ex. 15. 1–11; Rev. 14. Then John saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven opened. And one of the four living ones gave to seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. In chapter 16. 1 we are informed that the seven angels were commanded to pour out the seven vials or bowls of wrath. These bowls were to be poured on the adherents of the Beast. The plagues will be real just as in Egypt. When the first was poured upon the earth, the persons who had the mark of the Beast were smitten by an evil (original text is not "noisome") and grievous sore. It will be a real sore just as the plague in Egypt. Compare Ex. 9. 9; Dt. 28. 27, 35 (boil or botch of Egypt).

This will be fulfilled in the time of Antichrist. When the second angel poured his bowl into the sea, it became as blood of a dead man. This plague must be taken literally and will be suffered by all who adhere to Antichrist, whether they be Jews, Arabians, or other nationalities. The sea will especially be the seas in the empire of the Beast or Antichrist. The fishes in the seas and every living thing in them will die and the travelers or voyagers in boats may also suffer. The water being like the blood of a dead man will be clotted and putrescent. The third angel will pour his bowl into the fountains of waters and into the rivers, and they will be as blood. And the angel says that it is just to give the adherents of the Beast blood to drink, because they had poured out the blood of saints and prophets. John says: "I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." The altar is in this case personified. In the fourth plague the angel will pour his bowl on or over the sun, and people will be scorched with fire. But instead of repenting the sufferers will blaspheme God. The fifth angel will pour his bowl upon the throne of the Beast. His kingdom becomes darkened when this pouring takes place. This darkness must be understood as real darkness just as the Egyptian darkness. Joel speaks of this darkness in ch. 2, verses 2, 31: "A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.—The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh." Blackness without available light, as if the world was like a dark prison cell, will be terrible. In those days of the fifth bowl or vial the antichristian kingdom will be like hell on earth. The sufferers will gnaw their tongues. When it is stated that the plague of darkness fell upon the throne of the Beast, no intimation is given where the throne is located. As he is the emperor of the revived Roman empire, his throne may be in Rome or Constantinople. The second Beast or the False Prophet will be operating mostly in Palestine especially during the latter part of the seven years. The first Beast will also be in Palestine more or less. Both will be overcome and judged there at the glorious coming of Christ as stated in the 19th chapter.

With the pouring of the sixth bowl of wrath begins the preparation for the great battle of Armageddon. By the pouring of the sixth vial the river Euphrates is dried up in order that the kings of the far East may have an easy passage with their divisions of armies on their way to participate in the warfare which will culminate in the battles on the plains of Megiddo and around Jerusalem. At this time the whole world is in the greatest excitement and uproar. Armies from nearly every part of the world are dispatched to the so-called Near East. Such a gathering, according to verses 13, 14 and 16, depends upon influences from evil spirits. In the vision John sees them coming from the mouth of the dragon, the Beast, and from the False Prophet, and they look like frogs, but are really demons working infernal miracles to incite the rulers to gather to the battle at Armageddon. Compare 1 K. 22. 19–38 concerning Abah and his prophets. Concerning the river Euphrates compare Is. 11. 15 (the river evidently Euphrates). The drying of Euphrates will not only facilitate the march of soldiers from the kings of the sunrising like Japan and China, but later also the return of many Israëlites of the ten tribes living beyond Euphrates. As to the gathering of armies read also Zech. 14. 2, describing a siege around Jerusalem, and read also Ezek. 38 and 39.

Whilst the rulers of the world are incited to send troops to Palestine, John hears a voice (read Rev. 16. 15): "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Some critics claim that this verse does not belong to the original text. But in case it does, it is a warning from Jesus that His glorious coming as the victor will be unexpected, but the antichristians drunk with hellish inspiration will suddenly be overcome and judged. To them He comes as a thief, but the saints who are then living and therefore have not worshiped the Beast will be blessed. We must remember the vision interjected at the opening of the account of the seven plagues, and how the saints ultimately stand by the sea of glass singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Remember also the description in an anticipating way of the living to be judged in chapter 14. 15–20, where we read of the harvest and the vintage which will take place later as described in chapter 19.

When the seventh bowl or vial is poured on or over the air and is emptied, and therefore the symbol is fulfilled, a voice is heard out of the temple from the throne, saying: "It is done." When Christ had fulfilled the work of reconciliation in the objective sense, He said on the cross: "It is finished." When He has completed the work of practical redemption, He shall say the same: "It is finished" (done). The details are described in chapters to follow. During the seventh bowl there will be lightnings and thunders of an unusual kind and an earthquake so great that there has never been such a terrible one after man's creation. Read Is. 2. 19–21; Hag. 2. 6. The great city shall divide in three parts. The great city is Jerusalem, not because of dimensions, but on account of its great history. Jerusalem is in a way the city of the whole world, Jewish, Christian and Antichristian. Only Rome is next in importance. This city called Babylon the great will also be "remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." And the great cities of the nations will fall. During this terrible earthquake islands will be moved from their places and mountains will disappear. Add to this the hail from the sky, the hailstones being a talent in weight. There are different opinions as to the size of a talent. The Jewish talent for silver weight was about 115 pounds. Even if the weight were much less, we can understand the effects of being struck by such heavy pieces of hailstone. The suffering cannot be described. But the subjects of the Beasts, instead of repenting, blasphemed the Lord.

SECTION EIGHT

FINAL PROPHETIC SCENES.

1. *The Great Harlot and the Beast and Babylon the Great.*

Chapter 17 is an important parenthesis to present certain facts to complete the great story thread in the book of Revelation.

The woman in this chapter is a contrast to the woman in the 12th chapter. She is also a mother, but the mother of the harlots and the abominations of the earth. The woman is the great harlot. The first verse relates how one of the seven angels said to John: "Come hither. I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters." In the 15th verse the angel says that the waters are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues. Figuratively meant, the kings of the earth had committed fornication with this woman. In the vision John was carried to a wilderness, and he saw the woman, the great harlot, sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. The great harlot signifies the false religions and especially the false church as she appears at the time of the Beast. Among the false religions with great power at the time of the Beasts may be mentioned the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and the Roman Catholic. To these may be and must be counted the apostate churches contaminated by modernism. On account of false religions and modern infidelity, antichristianity becomes possible. The Beast and the False Prophet or the two last antichrists are carried forward on the wings of modern abominations. The Beast or the political Antichrist, although an infidel, will support the harlot at the beginning, according to verse 3, but later he will hate the great harlot. The political Antichrist must in the beginning of ascendancy to power be friendly to Jews, Mahommedans and Roman Catholics. Later he makes a covenant with many influential Jews, according to the prophecy of Daniel. He could not make such an attempt to further the Jewish ambition as this covenant implies, if he had not gained the support of Turks and other Mohammedans. The Eastern question in Palestine cannot be solved politically except by some scheme which will satisfy both Jews and Arabs. When the Second Advent is near at hand, God will hasten events and the prophecies will be fulfilled. If it is admitted that the great harlot is not pagan or papal Rome only, but includes more, as before has been stated, it is still true that what Rome stands for corresponds to 17. 6: "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." If in our time and from the time of Islam the disciples of Jesus have also been persecuted by the Mohammedans and Turks, not to speak of persecutions among all heathen nations in different lands, it cannot be denied that pagan Rome persecuted the saints and that also papal Rome has done the same. Concerning a new Great Babylon on the Euphrates, what is stated in verse 6 cannot be said. When John wrote the book of Revelation, only pagan Rome existed. The persecution lasted after the death of John. The papacy continued the persecutions and these have also occurred in Protestant countries. Within the Roman Church we should not forget the horrid persecution by the Inquisition. The Roman Church or papacy stands forth preëminently as an organization which fulfills the words in verse 2: "With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication." Harlotry is the symbolical expression for a debauched worship and idolatry. Although the great harlot represents more than the Roman Church and papacy, it is evident that papacy more than any other system has used politics to favor the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. This church has more political power than any other religious organization. It is also true that it corresponds to the statement in verse 4: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet." If we consider the ceremonial system of Rome, the garments of the pope, cardinals, bishops, priests and the worship of saints, dead or living, the idolatry of images and relics, and the whole worldly show, it is clear that papal Rome is the most prominent expression of religious harlotry among all the nations, because it claims to be the only true church and it is outstanding also on account of having its seat of government in the city of Rome, the former capital of the Roman empire and now with its Vatican city the capital of the Roman Catholic Church, where the Pope sits on his throne representing both temporal and spiritual sovereignty. When John in his prophetical telescope saw the woman who became the great harlot, he wondered with great wonder, amazed at the great change in the church of his own country. But he had himself written about Antichrist and seen visions of the Beast, and he had read what Paul wrote about the great apostasy. Just as he had seen the great Beast, he would now see the great Harlot. According to the seventh verse the angel revealed to him the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carried her. He says that the beast that carried the woman has seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads cannot be seven forms of administration as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes and emperors, because then Rome would be the seven heads or at least the six. What form of government would the seventh head represent? And there shall be an eighth, who is of the seven. What form of administration would he have? It would be a contradiction, because the tenth verse says that they are all kings. When we read in the ninth verse that the seven heads are so many mountains, it is figurative of seven world powers succeeding one another just as the four world powers related in Daniel and yet in characteristic traits remaining. The angel says in the tenth verse that five regal mountains had fallen at the time of John and that "the one is," namely, the sixth. There cannot be any dispute that at the time of John the Roman empire existed. The regal mountains or world powers that had fallen were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece. The sixth head was therefore the Roman empire which lasted a long time. The seventh head had not come at the time of John, but we who live in the twentieth century have strong reasons for holding the view that the seventh head or empire has come and passed, and it continued a little while. It was either the modern German or French empire. It is true that neither the German nor the French empire became a world power of the dimensions of Rome. Both aimed at a world dominion. The Napoleonic French empire was within the limits of the old Roman empire and held the attention of the world with fear as long as it lasted. Napoleon aimed at the restoration of a world empire. In order to understand his plans of world sovereignty it is necessary to study closely the history of Napoleon, his incursions in the near East, his appearance in Egypt and his plans to form an eastern empire. Think of the victory of Napoleon in Italy and the peace of Amiens which placed Napoleon in the highest esteem! He induced the Pope to crown him as emperor, yea, as an Augustus. This took place in Notre Dame in Paris.

According to the eleventh verse the Beast will be the eighth and *is of the seven.* When it is stated in the eighth verse that the Beast which *John saw was and is not* we must consider that John in the vision was transferred to the future when the Beast is about to come up out of the abyss. This refers to the second phase of the activity of the personal Antichrist, when he will be possessed by the devil and become the personal Beast. Then will the inhabitants of the earth who are not written in the Book of Life wonder when they behold the Beast, how that he was and is not, and shall come. It is the time of the revival of the Roman empire. In order to understand how the Beast was, is not, and shall come, we must think of the Beast both as collective and as individual. The world powers from

Egypt were not worshipers of the true God. The seven idolatrous powers were as a unity the Beast with seven heads, and at the time of the end appear the ten kings or kingdoms (the ten toes and the ten horns as related in Daniel). Remember that according to Rev. 13 the first beast appears with ten horns and seven heads. He is then the Beast (first the little horn of Daniel's prophecy). The ten horns are not outstanding in our day, but there is a development going on. The league of nations started a union of nations in Europe and the near East. We live at the time of these attempted political unions, but the next step must be a closer union of ten governments within the limits of the old Roman empire. Although the ten governments can be traced, the united formation has not as yet taken place. It is preceded by the present mixture of governments, monarchies, republics and unstable powers of rule in parliaments and cabinets. We live in the period after the old Roman empire which may be characterized as the Beast *is not,* but he shall come. When he comes in his first stage and the old Roman empire is forming, there will be a great wondering about the Beast that was, and is not, but shall come. Concerning the ten horns it is stated in the twelfth verse of ch. 17 that they shall become kings when the Beast as the personal Beast becomes King, or we may say emperor. In the thirteenth verse we read: "These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast." Then he has come in the full sense inspired from the abyss by the dragon. The Beast who before had carried and supported the great harlot will now hate the harlot, and the ten kings will do the same and they shall make her desolate. The Beast and the ten kings will not tolerate the false religions of the Great Harlot, but will be against all religions and especially against the Christian religion. They will war against the saints of God whether from the Christian Gentiles or Jews. The Beast will especially hate the Jews in general. As we know he broke the covenant with them. He causes them to go through what is called Jacob's trouble, which will be most severe in Palestine. He blasphemes God and especially His Son, the Lamb of God. The Beast or great Antichrist, although an atheist, will make himself a god and be worshiped as a god by the influence of the second Beast. And he will blaspheme the saints that dwell in heaven. It seems as if he was cognizant of the nearness of the Christ and those who tabernacle in the higher sky. He evidently will know or hear reports concerning those who are with the Lamb of Christ according to the latter part of chapter seven and the first part of chapter fourteen. According to chapter eleven he knew or must have known what happened to the two witnesses. And according to chapter 19. 19 he is so infatuated in folly that he and his world armies war against the Lord when He comes in glory with His heavenly army.

In chapter 17. 18 we find an outstanding statement concerning the woman called the Great Harlot: "And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." To John there were only two great cities, namely, Rome and Jerusalem. But as Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70, the only great city remaining to him was Rome. This city was the capital of the old Roman empire. Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, says that Rome was symbolically known as Babylon. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, who evidently informed him that he used the name Babylon for Rome. Tertullian says: "Babylon is a figure of the Roman city, mighty, proud of its sway and fiercely persecuting the saints." Coins and medals of old Rome in many cases bear the figure of a woman sitting on seven hills, and she is styled "The mistress of the world." After the time of St. John many large commercial cities have been built, but they do not correspond to the description in chapter 18. As the Great Harlot has a cosmopolitan character, other large cities may belong to the confederacy of evil, but there is no other city but Rome which has the necessary characteristics. In counter arguments it is stated that Rome lacks the great commercial distinction that is required in chapter 18, but we must consider the cosmopolitan character of Rome and that her trade is very great and of such a kind as described in chapter 18, and that the description of Rome covers also the past. We have already in another connection referred to that the scheme of the future rebuilt Babylon at the old site on the Euphrates is impossible. Such a Babylon could not in the sense of Rome boast: "I am a queen, and am no widow." Verse 20 in chapter 18 could not be applied to a rebuilt Babylon: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, for God hath judged your judgments on her." Verse 24 cannot be applied to a new Babylon: "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth." It would also come in conflict with the analogy of faith in prophecy and the parallelism of ideas and words. Daniel speaks of four great world powers and the Roman is the fourth which is the sixth in the book of Revelation as Daniel does not speak of Egypt and Assyria. According to Daniel in the second chapter, although he gives more details in following chapters, God shall set up an eternal kingdom in the days of the ten kings, signified by the ten toes. When we consider the long time of the Roman empire and that according to details in the book of Revelation the seventh head of the Beast has passed into fulfilment, it is not probable that a new Babylon will be built before the Second Advent. Besides the ten kingdoms can be traced and their formations can take place at any time.

The judgment of the Great Harlot is described in the 18th chapter. It is not necessary to explain in detail the contents of this chapter. We advise all readers to read the chapter several times. The description of the judgment visited upon the great city of the Great Harlot is a dramatically presented tragedy. The Beast or world emperor and his subordinate kings destroy the great city. In that respect they execute the will of God. Rome as the greatest expression politically and spiritually of harlotry is finally judged. As to the exegesis of the chapter the words in the 13th verse "bodies (slaves) and souls of men" may be hard to understand; but if we should consider the whole history of Rome, we find that there has been not only a traffic in slaves, but also through the papacy by the false doctrines of indulgences, purgatory, masses for living and dead, etc., a selling of human souls.

The judgment of great wicked cities also belongs to the judgment of the living. Compare chapter 16. 19. Before the judgment of the living continues, there is a parenthetical vision in heaven.

2. *Hallelujah in Heaven and the Marriage of the Lamb. Chapter 19. 1–10.*

The heavenly inhabitants rejoice over the judgment of the Great Harlot. Four Hallelujahs are sung. It is a mighty chorus, a great multitude, that sings the first Hallelujah and repeats the wonderful hymn a second time. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures or beings sing *"Amen, Hallelujah."* Again the great multitude accompanied by mighty thunders sing *"Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth."* Then they announce that the marriage of the Lamb is come. The Bridegroom is the Lamb or the Redeemer. The Bride in a collective sense consists of all those who are partakers of the first resurrection and of all those living true children of God who are changed and translated with those raised from the dead to meet the Lord in the upper sky heaven. The Bride is properly arrayed, as she is justified by faith and therefore holy in the sight of God. And in the upper sky the awards are given to all the members of the Bride on account of the fruits of faith. Figuratively she is therefore robed in white linen. But all is by grace. It is not stated what is served at the marriage supper, but it is sufficient to know that "Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And the angel adds: "These are true words of God." John was so overpowered by the vision and information that he fell down before the angel's feet to worship. But he was forbidden by the angel to do so, from which we know that angels are fellow servants with us. We are also informed that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. All prophecy concerns, more or less, Jesus and His kingdom. It is also interesting to know from this vision that the redeemed in heaven translated at the Second Advent know what is going on on earth, as they all sang in the heavenly chorus to praise God for the victory over the Great Harlot. From this, probably, more may be inferred. The first resurrection and the change of living believers and the translation of both companies necessarily prove that this taking up to heaven must precede the marriage of the Lamb. When the Lord comes in His glory, as related in the next division of this chapter, He does not leave His own, but they are with Him.

3. *The Gathering of the Armies of Nations to Armageddon and around Jerusalem, and the Coming of Christ with His Celestial Army. Also an Inset Based on Prophecies concerning the Return of Jews and Israel to the Promised Land.*

Chapter 19. 11–21.

Read ch. 16. 12–16. In ch. 19. 19 we read: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army." In the sixteenth chapter at the pouring out of the sixth bowl we are informed about the activity of demons in influencing the rulers of the world to send divisions of armies to Palestine to war against the Lord. These demons knew that Christ would come. The Beasts knew it also. The decisive time was approaching. By demoniacal inspiration the great army of the revived Roman empire commanded by the personal Beast or the great political Antichrist and the ten kings march towards the battlefield of nations called in Hebrew Har-Magedon. It is possible and even probable that nations outside the ten kingdom conferacy will be compelled for commercial and other reasons to assist the great Antichrist. Besides, remember the statement in ch. 16. 12, that the river Euphrates will be dried up in order that the kings of the far East may send divisions of their armies. There is also a great confederation in the North. This confederation is against the Christians and the Jews, but also hostile to the revived Roman empire, which will cause complications. According to the latter part of Dan. 11, there may also be dissensions within the Ten-Kingdom Confederacy.

According to Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, Gog and his kingdoms in the north will also come and be represented by army divisions. There also seems to be a confederation of countries further south. This

Gog is not the same as Gog and Magog in Rev. 20. 8. The same names are used as they also come from distant corners of the earth. But the Gog in Ezekiel 38 is the ruler in Magog. He is also called the prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tobolsk). Gomer also takes part, and covers Germany and Austria of our day. Persia, Cush and Put and others are mentioned. This invasion from the north cannot be placed some time after the Second Advent as some claim on account of Ezek. 38. 14. The latter part of the verse must be understood to refer to the time Palestine has been in a state of comparative security and colonized by the Jews through the efforts of Zionism. Occasional disturbances on account of the jealousy of the Arabs have not made habitation insecure. Therefore in the future the rulers in the far north could reason as stated in verses 10–12. We should also consider that conditions as pictured in verses 18–20 could not obtain after the glorious victory of Jesus Christ as related in Rev. 19. The invasion of Gog and his adherents must therefore be in connection with the battle on the field of Megiddo and around Jerusalem. This is also clear from Zechariah 14. 2: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle." Notice *all nations!* We can well understand that the battles of Armageddon and around Jerusalem will be bloody as stated in Rev. 14. 20. Compare also

Is. 63. 2–4. The battlefield will extend from Megiddo to Bozrah, 1600 stadia. Compare also Hab. 3. 3–16. Compare Is. 34. 1–8. Think of a river of human and animal blood for a distance of 1600 stadia! Josephus says that at the destruction of Jerusalem the blood was running so high as to quench the fires in the homes where the blood happened to flow. We read in Is. 34. 7, 8: "And their land shall be drunken with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompence for the cause of Zion." In Rev. 19. 17 an angel calls on all birds to come and be gathered together unto the great supper of human and animal flesh. And in the 21st verse it is said that "all the birds were filled with their flesh." In Ezek. 38. 22 we read concerning Gog and his hordes: "And with pestilence and with blood will I enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and upon his hordes, and upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." In ch. 39. 12 it is stated that so many of the adherents of Gog were killed that it will take seven months for Israel to bury them in order to cleanse the land. Read also Ezek. 39. 9, 10. In Joel 3. 12 it is written: "Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the nations round about." In the same chapter verses

1 and 2 we read: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will execute judgment upon them there for my people and for my heritage Israel."

During the battle at Megiddo and around Jerusalem the Antichrists imagined in demoniac insanity that they would be victorious over Christ, when they saw heaven begin to open its portals for the heavenly cavalry, and the cannonading from the sky began. It was the greatest insanity of the ages! Heaven open! The day had finally come, when Christ would return in glory, He was visibly coming from the upper sky in the clouds of heaven in company with the saints and angels. In Jude 14th verse it is written: "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones." In Zech. 14. 5 it is written: "Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee." The holy ones are the children of God, justified by faith in Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Their garments of fine linen, white and pure identifies them. We read in Col. 3. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." The angels are also with Him. In 2 Th. 1. 7 it is written: "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire." It is stated that the Lord will sit on a white horse and the armies of heaven follow Him on white horses. We do not need to speculate concerning the appearance of horses in the spiritual world. If it is a figure, it is a figure of reality which appeared in such a way in the vision. But such figures occur in several chapters of the Bible. There may be celestial horses and carriages. The Commander of the celestial cavalry is called Faithful and True, and He will make war in righteousness. He has one name known only to Himself. The other names we can read in the Bible. Here He is also called The Word of God. On the garment of His thigh is written King of kings and Lord of lords. In 19. 15 it is stated that He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron and that He shall tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. When the celestial army enters into the fight with the armies assembled from the nations, the battle is short and decisive. The two last verses in the 19th chapter describe the result. The Beast or the Great Antichrist and the False Prophet were taken and cast alive into the lake of fire. Their armies could not help them. And the devil could not help them. "And the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh." One mighty flash of the power of the Lord and the powers of the world are gone. The stone has fallen on the great image of Nebuchadnezzar. The rule and misrule of the Gentiles and the Times of the Gentiles are at an end. Compare Dan. 2 and Mt. 21. 44, which have been fulfilled. Gog and his armies were also crushed. Compare again Ezek. 39. 11, 12. It is also of value to study Is. 30. 33. With the fall of the antichristian kingdoms the worldly governments are at an end, and according to Dan. 2. 44 "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." The battle at Armageddon and around Jerusalem will be the last war. According to Rev. 20. 9, another attempt will be made to war, but it will fail as fire will come down from the sky and devour the army trying to besiege the beloved city Jerusalem.

The Second Advent in its glorious and victorious manifestation has come, when the portals of heaven are opened and the Lord comes on the white horse at the head of the celestial army of saints and angels. In this army from heaven will be all who have part in the first resurrection and who were changed as living and caught up with the raised to meet the Lord in the upper sky. With this glorious coming of Christ several events will take place. Then will be fulfilled Zech. 14. 4: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." Compare Acts 1. 11: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." Mt. 24. 27 must also be fulfilled: "For as the lightning cometh from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man." Every thing stated must be judged by Christ. There are therefore many judgment scenes. The judgment day is not an ordinary day of twenty-four hours. He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron and He shall also shepherdize them. As to the main pericope used as text on the judgment Sunday, Mt. 25. 31–46, it is partly a description of a judgment scene of the living and partly a delineation of principles in conducting the judgment. Nations cannot as a rule be sentenced. It must therefore refer to the individuals. If we consider all the parables and the judgment scenes which must be fulfilled, the pericope we consider cannot mean that all the living at Christ's coming will immediately be sent either to heaven or to hell. Then all the nations would disappear from earth. Many of the prophecies could not then be fulfilled. It also proves that the judgment day is a period. All will be judged and the principles laid down will be followed. We should also consider the contents of the judgment as recorded in ch. 20. 12. It is principally a judgment of the dead as to their works. The pericope in Mt. 25 refers also to works and the recompense. Their standing on the right settles where they belong, as Christ separates them in the same way as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

In this connection we will also discuss the restoration or return of the Jews and Israel. We call it an inset as nothing is stated about it in Rev. 19, but there are many prophecies in regard to it. Many interpreters spiritualize all the texts relating to it and say that Israel refers to the Church. It is true that all Christians in a certain sense are the children of Abraham and that many Jews and Israelites have become Christians, but there is a distinction between the Gentiles and the old covenant people which cannot be ignored. And we cannot ignore Romans 11. But in this inset we consider the restoration of Jews and Israel to the promised land. Many claim that there will not be a return in a national sense. But even the present return to Palestine numbers more than the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. There are certain Bible passages which cannot be explained spiritually, figuratively, or symbolically. And all the words of God must be fulfilled. A right interpretation has also a bearing on what will take place during the Second Advent period. The Jews remain a distinct people and their racial characteristics remain as a rule the same. We will call attention to certain passages which cannot be spiritualized. We begin with

Gen. 15. 18: "In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." This promise must be fulfilled. Read Deut. 30–33. Also read Is. 11. 11, 12 about "the second time to recover the remnant of his people," etc. Read Jer. 30. 3 and 32. 37: "Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely." Read Ezek. 37. 21–25. In Amos 9. 15 it is written: "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out their land." Read Zech. 12. 10–14. Read Acts 15. 16–18. The return will take place in connection with the gathering of all nations to Armageddon and to the valley of Jehoshaphat. We quote Joel 3. 1, 2: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will execute judgment upon them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have parted my land. In Deut. 30. 3, 4 it is stated that the Lord will return and gather Israel from all the peoples "whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee." Some readers of prophecy have been perplexed, how the Jews and Israelites could return in opposition to the will of the Arabs, Turks, and other nationalities. This is a problem in the present limited return, but will not be a hindrance at the great restoration, when the Lord interferes. When the Israelites came from Egypt, the inhabitants in the promised land could not resist the invasion. Consider the depopulation of Palestine during the battles at Armageddon, around Jerusalem, along the battle line from the field of Megiddo to Bozrah and the attack from above, when the celestial army appears! God will according to His promises take care of the assembling of Jews and Israel at the right time. If there will be any army divisions left from the Ten-Kingdom Confederation or from the Gog invasion, they will flee. We may also quote Joel 2. 20: "But I will remove far off from you the northern army and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, etc." Neither should we forget that the Lord uses angels to assemble His people, nor should we forget His almighty power. And when we reflect upon the many events connected with the return of the Lord, it is evident that it is no ordinary day. Let us not forget the 39th chapter of Ezekiel, where it is stated in verse 9 that after the battles the remaining dwellers in the cities of Israel had wood from the weapons etc. during seven years and that according to verse 12 the burial of the dead required seven months.

There are many events that belong to the transition time. Read Zech. 12. 9—and ch. 13. 1. In those days the Jews and Israelites will be converted and recognize Christ as their Messiah. This is the beginning of the time of which Peter spoke as recorded in Acts 3: 19. At the time Peter speaks of, Christ has come in His glory. In the 21st verse it is stated: "Whom (Jesus) the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things." Read to the end of the chapter. Notice the *times* of restoration of all things.

4. *The Times of Restoration of All Things and the Thousand Years. Chapter 20. 1 5.*

Christ has returned to earth in His glory and as the great Victor according to chapter 19. The Times of Restoration have commenced as John sees it in the vision. John is in the vision transferred to these great events. He sees first an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand, and the angel laid hold of the dragon or Satan and bound him for a thousand years, and he cast him into the abyss, that he should not deceive the nations, until the thousand years should be finished. Then he would be loosed for a short time. If we think that it would be better, if he were not loosed at all, we should remember that God is omniscient and that He would prove by the incarceration of Satan that he was the same devil after a thousand years as he was before. When this is proved to the world, Satan and his demons will be sentenced to the eternal imprisonment in hell. The long prison life in the abyss will not change the character of the devil and his angels. The period of the absence of Satan and his demons will also prove that the nations on earth cannot blame Satan and the demons for their sins and temptations.

The abyss is the headquarters of the devils, and some of them were shut up there for a certain time and purpose. Compare Rev. 9. 1–5. Hades in the New Testament is the abode and intermediate state of the wicked, and Abraham's bosom and Paradise are the home and intermediate state of the children of God. Hell is the final place of punishment for Satan, the demons and the wicked. This place is also called the lake of fire and brimstone and Gehenna. No one is in Gehenna now. The first to enter there will be the two Beasts, then Satan and his evil angels and all the wicked. All who enter Hades will remain there until the last judgment and then be sentenced to the final hell or Gehenna. Hades is a place of torment and therefore a hell, but the original text makes a distinction, and it would be better if all translations would render Hades and Gehenna correctly; otherwise it would be better to retain the original by Anglicizing the original expressions. Some translations retain the original Hades without translation and translate Gehenna (geenna) with hell. Hades cannot be translated with kingdom of the dead, because all the wicked are in Hades, and all the dead children of God are in Paradise. Hades may be translated with kingdom of death.

According to verse 4, John saw thrones and those sitting upon them to whom judgment was given, and he saw the martyrs who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God. He also saw a third group of persons who had not worshipped the Beast and his image. The first of these groups must have been those whom he had previously called the twenty-four elders, the four living beings and also the living believers who were changed and translated at the first phase of the Second Advent to meet the Lord in the upper sky regions. Remember that the living would not precede the raised saints. In this first group are also all the martyrs previous to the time of the Beast. Then in the vision he saw as the second group all the souls or persons who had been beheaded during the reign of Antichrist or the Beast. In the third group he saw all who had not worshipped the Beast or his image but died from other causes than being slain by the Beast. Beheading will be the usual mode of slaying of those who do not worship Antichrist and use his mark. John saw that all of the three groups lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *They lived* means that they had been raised from the dead or transformed. To the first group must also belong those who will be caught up after change during the great tribulation. Compare ch. 7. 14; 12. 5; 14. 1–3; 16. 15 for the possibility of such a change to many who will be in some phase of the great tribulation. The last reference concerns Christians who live during the pouring out of the sixth bowl and may be caught up just before the darkest phase of the great tribulation and Jacob's trouble.

In ch. 20. 5, 6 we read that "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished," and that "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." It is important to understand correctly the meaning of "they lived" in verse 4, and of "lived not" in verse 5, and "the first resurrection" in verses 5 and 6. *They lived* cannot mean spiritually, for so they lived before their death, when they bore testimony for Christ and against Antichrist. It does not mean that they lived in their souls, as they lived thus in their condition after death; the soul never dies. Death is the separation of the soul from the body, and it is the body that is dead. When the soul returns to the body, the person lives. "They lived," therefore, means they lived corporeally and were consequently raised from the dead. When it is stated that the rest of the dead *"lived not,"* it means that they were corporeally dead, because their souls were separated from their bodies and so they would be until the thousand years were finished; then they would be raised from the dead and appear before the great white throne to be sentenced or judged. *"The first resurrection"* with its divisions takes place before the thousand years. It is called the first, because the second is to follow after the thousand years. In 1 Th. 4. 16 we are informed that the dead in Christ shall rise first, but it is not stated how soon after or how long after the wicked shall rise. It cannot mean a spiritual resurrection from sin, because then it would imply that resurrections from sin should cease for a thousand years, after which Satan would be free again and conditions would be worse than before. We should also remember that the doctrine of the first resurrection is found in eschatological discourses like in 1 Th. 4 and Rev. 20. 5, 6. It must therefore be taken to mean what is stated. We should also remember what Paul says in 1 Cor. 15. 23, 24: "But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end," etc.

When Christ has come and Satan is bound the times of restoration, the thousand years, as called in the book of Revelation, will begin in earnest, and then Christ and His saints will shepherdize the nations. This does not mean that Christ and the saints will constantly be on earth, but the heavenly world will not be separated from the earth as at present. It will be an intermingling in a fuller sense than in the Old Testament times and during the dwelling of Christ on earth. Then also angels appeared. Christ also manifested Himself between His resurrection and ascension, and also Paul. But soon after this, the angels ceased to appear in a visible manner. Toward the close of the first century Christ appeared in visions to John. Nineteen hundred years, or about that period of time, have passed since Christ and angels walked on earth. Christ promised to return. When He returns and the book of Revelation reaches final fulfilment, He will not leave His own. All the prophecies must be fulfilled. There are prophecies which cannot be spiritualized. There must be some time, when they are to be fulfilled. Such a period is the one we read of in Acts called the Times of Restoration of All Things. They are of such a nature that they cannot be fulfilled before Christ returns. The shepherdizing of the nations with a rod of iron follows the battle at Armageddon. The saints are with Christ at His coming according to ch 19. In ch.20. 6 it is written that they shall reign with Him. This will be fulfilled at first during the times of restoration. Many of the prophecies concerning the Jews and Israel are evidently fulfilled after the Second Coming of Christ. Mt. 19. 28 cannot be fulfilled before Christ returns. Read carefully in this verse what Christ said to the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This does not mean that the twelve apostles will constantly be on earth and sit on thrones in Jerusalem. They may have thrones in the New Jeruslaem above and may sometimes sit on thrones in Jerusalem on earth. Raised and glorified persons will not live an earthly life again, but will visit the earth just as angels have done and execute such commands as the Lord gives them. During the times of restoration the Lord, the translated saints and angels will often reveal themselves among men on earth just as occasions require. In the Gospels we are informed how the Lord revealed Himself during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension. Angels have appeared on earth. Moses and Elias appeared visibly on the Mount of Transfiguration. We should not, therefore, think it is impossible that after the Second Advent the Lord, His coregents and angels will often be seen on earth. The shepherdizing of the nations will often make this necessary. During the times of restoration a different economy from that of the period of the Church will obtain. The mystery of God in regard to His kingdom will begin to be revealed with the visible return of Christ. It will be not only the greatest missionary period, but also a kingdom of justice by which the moral conditions on earth will be greatly improved. The nations on earth will at least be nominally Christian. Not every human being will become a true Christian, but their number will be greater than now. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Hab. 2. 14. Then the prophecy of Zech. 14. 9 will be fulfilled. "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one." Zech. 14. 12–19 refers to conditions partly after the battle of Armageddon, when the Lord will punish the armies attacking Jerusalem. It refers also to the time when the feast of tabernacles will be resumed after the return of the Jews and Israel. Read Zech. 14. 16–18.

When the Jews and Israel have returned after the glorious victory of Christ according to chapter 19 in the book of Revelation and parallel passages, they will as a nation occupy a prominent place among the former Gentiles. Compare Amos 9. 11, 12, 15 and Acts 15. 13–18. Read Is. 2. 2–4, and ch. 60–62.

Those who return after the great Armageddon and those who are protected by flight during the so-called Jacob's trouble may be a remnant who later come back and soon multiply. They will rebuild the waste places. And they will build a great temple, but it cannot be a place of offering and sacrifices like the old sanctuary. There may be offerings, but not to propitiate God. The epistle to the Hebrews proves this most conclusively. The sacrifice of Christ ended all bloody sacrifices to propitiate God. If the temple described in Ezekiel shall be literally erected during the beginning of the times of restoraton, the liturgical services must not be a return to the old Levitical sacrifices, and the ceremonial offerings must express thanks to God for the atonement and redemption through Christ. The temple in Jerusalem will be a house of prayer for the nations, and Jerusalem will even more than before be the Beloved City. Christ will be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and He will therefore be the King of Israel also. The words of the angel Gabriel must be fulfilled as recorded in Lk. 1. 32, 33: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." But it does not mean that Christ will only be in Jerusalem and rule as an earthly king. His throne is in the New Jerusalem above, but He and His coregents visit earth as occasions require. In this connection if may be of interest to read of the prince in Ezek. 44. 1–3 and ch. 46. He evidently is not the Lord, because he has natural descendants. He seems to be a vice regent sitting on David's throne in Jerusalem. Christ is the real king both in Palestine and all over earth. In 1 Cor. 15. 25 it is stated: "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of earth." Ps. 72. 8. And it is also stated that "Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem." Is. 24. 23. During His reign there will be no wars, conditions will improve constantly, diseases will decrease, and death, although it does not cease until later, will not cause so many pangs as before. In Is. 65. 20 it is stated: "the child shall die a hundred years old." Nature will be harmonious. In the 25th verse we read: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." We can easily understand, how spiritual and temporal things will improve during the times of restoration. When we consider all inventions for human comfort during this age, when Satan is free to go among men and tempt them, and their reason is darkened, what shall it be, when Satan and his forces are withdrawn! What shall it be, when Christ and His coregents rule on earth! But the times of restoration are only the transition to the glorious eternal kingdom.

But before the full realization we are informed in Rev. 20. 7, that Satan shall be loosed for a short time and he shall be able to lead astray nations dwelling in the four corners of the earth. These nations are called Gog and Magog, but they are so called, because their character is like Gog and his armies at the time of the Lord's Second Advent. But their attempt to war against Israel and the beloved City will utterly fail. Fire will come out of heaven and devour them. Then follows the final judgment of Satan. He is sentenced to Gehenna or hell to which eternal prison the Beast and the False prophet preceded him. But why was Satan loosed again? Evidently he was loosed again to prove two facts: Firstly, that Satan could not be changed, and secondly, that man could again be tempted by him. God's justice and the laws of God were vindicated.

Then follows the last act in the judgment. John sees a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it. It is not stated, where the throne was placed. But the majesty of the Lord on the judgment throne was so extraordinarily outstanding, that in the vision the earth and the heaven fade into insignificance as if there was no room for them. It does not mean that they actually disappeared, because the sea gave up the dead which were in it. There is a resurrection of the dead as we find stated in 20. 5: "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished." In the 13th verse we are informed that death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them. The expression 'lived' means resurrected, because as souls they were not dead. When Hades gives up its inhabitants, it means the resurrection of the wicked, because Hades is their state and dwelling place between death and judgment. Death is also mentioned, because death killed the body, and the wicked souls were imprisoned in Hades. The universality of the resurrection is also described by the expressions: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them." The sea is mentioned, as all will be raised from the place, where they were buried. Death is given a name as a place, because many of the graves are in the sea and most of them in the cemeteries on land or elsewhere. Although the second resurrection is mostly a resurrection of the wicked dead, we must not ignore the fact that godly people died also during the times of restoration. All were raised at this last resurrection, but the great mass of all wicked dead from the beginning of humanity, small and great, are referred to in verse 12, but notice that among the judgment books, there was also a book of life. Notice also that the judgment is a sentence based on works. The wicked raised from Hades were all destined for hell, but there punishments were to be based on what was written in the books. We should also notice that verse 15 implies a judgment of those who are living at the time described, whether godly or wicked, because it is stated that if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. A change of body was of course necessary in either case. With the judgment before the Great White Throne the last enemy to be destroyed will be Death. No human words can adequately describe the victory over Death. All Christians rejoice in the hope of the great victory over Death. Glorious will be the day, when the times of restoration have reached their goal, when the devil, the demons and all the wicked are separated for ever from the children of God.

Before we study the next chapter about the new heaven and a new earth, we should observe that the book of Revelation does not describe the change from the old earth and the former sky to a new earth and heaven. In 2 Pet. 3. 10 it is written: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The perishing of the world by means of burning will happen on the

Lord's day, but the exact time is not stated. According to Revelation it must be before John in the vision saw the new world in connection with the white throne of judgment. John does not describe the conflagration of the Lord's day, but by reading 2 Pet. 3, and studying the original text we can understand the meaning of the perishing of the world. Three words are used for world, namely earth, cosmos and eon. The last word is mostly used in describing the world in its destruction, or the end of the world. Eon means a time duration, eras, periods, or dispensation. The verbs used mean passing away and not annihilation. It is not the end of the earth. It is stated that at the time of the flood the world perished by water, but the earth was not annihilated. The careful reading of 2 Pet. 3 gives the impression that the burning will be a purifying of such a nature that the earth and sky heaven will be as new. In Eccl. 1. 4 we read: "The earth abideth forever." The dissolving of elements, the burning in sky and on earth will as to its appearance be as a conflagration or burning up, from which the earth and sky heaven will come forth as a new earth and heaven. The human beings who stood before the White Great Throne were in such a condition that they could not burn up. The raised who were sentenced to Gehenna and those written in the book of life were not in the conflagration on earth. To speak in the words of the future, the children of God will then be safe in the heavenly New Jerusalem and the kingdom of heaven.

5. *In the Main a Description of the New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem.*

Chapter 21—22. 5.

The eternal state brings a New Heaven. The old sky heaven which we now see is wonderful with its sun, moon and stars. No telescope has discovered all the suns and stellar worlds. And think if it were possible for us to see the "land that reacheth afar" (in Hebrew, the land of far distance), Is. 33. 17. If we could travel with the speed of light, 185,000 miles a second, it would take us about four years and three months to reach the star Alpha Centauri. There are more than twenty millions of stars. If the present universe is magnificent, who can describe the renewed heaven! No human pen can describe the New Heaven. There are plenty of homes in the stellar worlds for the many orders of angels: thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. There will be many mansions in the kingdom of glory for the children of God, the kings of and from earth. Christ said: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

The Capital City in heaven or kingdom of God is the New Jerusalem. This is the city for which Abraham looked. Compare Heb. 11. 10. John says in verse 2: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." When the city is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, it is because of the glorified inhabitants who are collectively the Bride of Christ. The New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven, but will not be settled on earth. It will be always "Jerusalem which is above," Gal. 4. 26. The city will be located high above the earth. Otherwise the nations cannot walk by means of its light. The characteristic of those who may enter the city and the fact that the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations, show that the New Jerusalem was visible on earth during the times of Restoration or during the thousand years, although the city will be nearer earth when the latter becomes the New Earth. It is also evident that the city could not be on the surface of the earth on account of its great size, being 12,000 stadia, which may mean 1500 miles. We should also consider that the city will be square and that the length, breadth and height will be equal. If the city has the same height as breadth and length, it is probable that there are streets or avenues above one another. If these are a mile apart perpendicularly and horizontally, compute how many there would be, even if large spaces were set aside for the thrones, the river of water of life, the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits yielding its fruit every month, and for parks. The city is lighted by God Himself. No light on earth can give us an idea of the celestial light. We cannot describe the great mansions of the city and the life in heaven. This city of the New Jerusalem is the Capital City of the Kingdom of God. Neither can we picture in human language its splendor as it appears from the outside in the sky. It is best simply to read chapter 21. 10–23. Look at the glorious city which shines like a jasper stone clear as crystal. There is a wall around it, great and high, but the city towers above it. The wall is 144 cubits and has twelve foundations. The wall is of jasper and the foundations adorned with precious stones of varying colors. The entire city is of pure celestial gold like unto pure shining glass. In the wall are twelve gates, each gate a pearl. The main avenue of the city is of pure gold. From earth this city will shine with a light which cannot be described. The gates are open constantly, and there is free access to the throne of God.

As the New Jerusalem is the seat of the throne of God, this city is the capital of the Kingdom of Glory. It then becomes evident that the Kingdom must consist of more than the New Jerusalem and the New Earth. When we read of the many starry worlds in the present condition of the universe, we may be assured that the new sky will not look like empty space. The new heaven spoken of in chapter 21. 1 includes the renewed sun, planets and stars. The many to us innumerable hosts of angels must have habitations in the great universe of God. As the saints shall judge or govern the angels, this government must be in such stellar worlds where angels dwell. But there are also angels who execute commands in the New Jerusalem and on the new earth. The blessed, or kings, who rule with the Lord are not limited to earth. The whole heaven is there home and place to serve God. They also have access to the New Jerusalem and to the throne at any time. Many of them live there to do such service as God has assigned. Do not forget that Christ said that there are many mansions in the Father's house. We do not need to speculate as to the inhabitants on the new earth. Wherever the saints may be, they are at home in God's kingdom and have always a right to visit the new earth. Nor do we need to worry about food. Although the saved may eat and enjoy the fruits in the heavenly world, the life in heaven means enjoyment of so many wonderful things that our present enjoyments are not comparable, and the greatest will be to be with God and the blessed associations with all the children of God, including, therefore, those who are dear to us who are there.

In the Epilogue do not forget the three words in verses 7, 12 and 20: "I come quickly." This is the last word from the Lord in heaven. The next time His voice will be heard from heaven will be when He descends from the heavenly home with a shout to meet His saints, also called His bride and, with another expression, the children of God who have been raised from the dead or as living changed and caught up to meet Him on His way to earth at the Second Advent.

It may seem to many that the words, *"I come quickly,"* contradict the fact that about 1900 years have passed, and our dear Lord has not yet come. But there is no contradiction, if we consider the matter carefully. Our Lord ascended to heaven forty days after His resurrection and the Revelation was given to John in the last part of the first century. The words "I come quickly" are found in the epilogue of the book of Revelation. These last comforting words of the Lord could not mean that He would return immediately after the Revelation was given. The meaning of His ascension had to be realized and prophecies had to be fulfilled before He could return. It is like a brother or dear friend leaving for an important mission, who consoles us by saying that he will return as quickly as possible. Although we wish intensely that he should come back quickly, we are also anxious that he should fulfill his obligations. Our Lord, who is our brother and friend, is now in heaven fulfilling great things as high-priest, great shepherd of souls, spiritual king and head of the Church. When His great work is accomplished and certain prophecies fulfilled, He will come back quickly according to His promise. "He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry." He will come at the time set. "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

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